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THE

LIFE AND TIMES

OF THE

REV. RICHARD BAXTER:

WITH

A CRITICAL EXAMINATION OF HIS WRITINGS.

BY REV. WILLIAM ORME,

AUTHOR OF "THE LIFE OF JOHN OWEN, D.D.;" "BIBLIOTHECA BIBLICA," ETC.

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CONTENTS TO VOL. II.

CHAPTER I.

Page

WORKS ON THE EVIDENCES OF RELIGION.

Introductory Observations on the Theological Literature of the period—Arrangement of this Part of the Work—Importance of the Evidences of Religion—'Unreasonableness of Infidelity'—Dedication to Broghill—Intended as a Reply to Clement Writer—Nature and Plan of the Work—'Reasons of the Christian Religion'—View of the Work—'More Reasons for the Christian Religion'—Intended as a Reply to Lord Herbert—'On the Immortality of the Soul'—Notice of First Attack in English on this Doctrine—Glanvil—Dr. Henry More—Baxter's Notions of the Soul's Immateriality—'Certainty of the World of Spirits'—Singular Nature of this Book—Remarks on Witchcraft and Apparitions—Baxter, the First Original Writer in English on the Evidences of Revelation—Mornay—Grotius—Bishop Fotherby—Stillingfleet—Concluding Observations, . . 9

CHAPTER II.

DOCTRINAL WORKS.

Introductory Observations—'Aphorisms of Justification'—Animadversions on the Aphorisms by Burgess, Warren, Wallis, Cartwright, and Lawson—Other Antagonists—'Apology'—Molinæus, Crandon, Eyres—'Confession of Faith'—'Perseverance'—Kendal—Barlow—Shepherd—'Saving Faith'—

Page

'Dissertations on Justification'—'On Justifying Righteousness'—Controversy with Tully—'Original Sin'—'Universal Redemption'—'Catholic Theology'—'Methodus Theologiæ'—'End of Doctrinal Controversies'—General View of Baxter's Doctrinal Sentiments—Strictures on his Manner of conducting Controversy—Conclusion, . . 34

CHAPTER III.

WORKS ON CONVERSION.

Introductory Remarks—'Treatise of Conversion'—'Call to the Unconverted'—'Now or Never'—Directions for a Sound Conversion'—'Directions to the Converted'—'Character of a Sound Christian'—'Mischiefs of Self-ignorance'—The Countess of Balcarras—Controversy with Bishop Morley—'A Saint or a Brute'—Various smaller Treatises—Concluding Observations, ... 72

CHAPTER IV.

WORKS ON CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE.

Introductory Remarks—'Right Method for settled Peace of Conscience'—Colonel Bridges—'The Crucifying of the World'—Thomas Foley, Esq.—'Treatise on Self-Denial'—'Obedient Patience'—'Life of Faith'—'Knowledge and Love compared'—Sir Henry and Lady Diana Ashurst—'God's Goodness Vindicated'—Various Discourses—'Cure of Melancholy'—Baxter's Experience among Persons thus afflicted—Conclusion, ... 96

CHAPTER V.

WORKS ON CHRISTIAN ETHICS.

Introductory Observations—Systematic Theology—The Fathers—Shoolmen—Casuists—Reformers—Calvin's Institutions—Works of Perkins—Archbishop Usher's System—Leigh's Body of Divinity—Baxter's 'Christian Directory'—Intended as the Second Part of his 'Methodus'—His own Account of it—Remarks on the arrangement—Opposed to the Politics of Hooker—Progress of the Doctrine of Passive Obedience in England—Character of the 'Directory'—Compared with the 'Ductor Dubitantium' of Taylor—The 'Reformed Pastor'—'Reasons for Ministerial Plainness'—'Poor Man's Family

Page.
Book'—'The Catechising of Families'—'The Mother's Catechism'—'Sheets for the Poor and Afflicted'—'Directions to Justices of the Peace'—'How to do Good to Many'—'Counsels to Young Men'—The Divine Appointment of the Lord's Day—Concluding Remarks, . . 121

CHAPTER VI.

WORKS ON CATHOLIC COMMUNION.

Unity of the Early Christians—Causes of Separation—Means of Re-Union—Sentiments of Hall on this Subject—Baxter, the Originator, in Modern Times, of the true Principle of Catholic Communion—His Various Labors to promote it—'Christian Concord'—Baxter's Church Communion at Kidderminster—'Agreement of Ministers in Worcestershire'—'Disputations of Right to the Sacraments'—Sir William Morice—'Confirmation and Restauration'—'Disputations on Church Government'—Dedicated to Richard Cromwell—'Judgment concerning Mr. Dury—Some account of Dury—Universal Concord'—Baxter's Efforts in promoting Union retarded by the Restoration—'Catholic Unity'—'True Catholic and Catholic Church'—'Cure of Church Divisions'—Controversy with Bagshaw—'Defence of the Principles of Love'—'Second Admonition to Bagshaw'—'Church told of Bagshaw's Scandal'—Further Account of Bagshaw—'True and Only Way of Concord'—'Catholic Communion Defended,' in Five Parts—'Judgment of Sir Matthew Hale'—'Baxter's Sense of the Subscribed Articles'—'Church Concord'—'Of National Churches'—'Moral Prognostication'—Summary View of Baxter's Sentiments on Catholic Communion and Church Government, ... 152

CHAPTER VII.

WORKS ON NONCONFORMITY.

Introductory Observations on the History of Nonconformity—'The Nonconformist Papers'—Never answered—'Sacrilegious Desertion of the Ministry—'The Judgment of Nonconformists of the Office of Reason in Matters of Religion'—'Of the Difference between Grace and Morality'—'About things Indifferent'—About things Sinful'—'What Mere Nonconformity is not'—'Nonconformists' Plea for Peace'—Second Part of Ditto—Defence of Ditto—Correspondence with Tillotson—'Answer to Dr. Stillingfleet'—'Second Defence of the Mere Nonconformist'—'Search for the English Schis-

Page

matic'—'Treatise of Episcopacy'—'Third Defence of the Cause of Peace—'Apology for the Nonconformists' Ministry' —'English Nonconformity'—Conclusion, . 188

CHAPTER VIII.

WORKS ON POPERY.

Introductory Observations—'The Safe Religion'—'Winding-Sheet for Popery'—'Grotian Religion'—Controversy with Pierce, Womack, Heylin, and Bramhall—'Key for Catholics'—'Successive Visibility of the Church'—Controversy with Johnson—'Fair Warning'—'Difference between the Power of Church Pastors and the Roman Kingdom'—'Certainty of Christianity without Popery'—'Full and Easy Satisfaction, which is the True Religion'—Dedicated to Lauderdale—'Christ, not the Pope, the Head of the Church' —Roman Tradition Examined'—'Naked Popery'—'Controtroversy with Hutchinson—'Which is the True Church'—'Answer to Dodwell'—'Dissent from Sherlock'—'Answer to Dodwell's Letter calling for more answers'—'Against Revolt to a Foreign Jurisdiction'—'Protestant Religion truly stated'—Conclusion, ... 212

CHAPTER IX.

WORKS ON ANTINOMIANISM.

The Nature of Antinomianism—Its Appearance at the Reformation—Originated in Popery—Origin in England—The Sentiments of Crisp—Baxter's early Hostility to it—The chief Subject of his 'Confession of Faith'—Dr. Fowler—Baxter's 'Holiness, the Design of Christianity'—'Appeal to the Light'—'Treatise of Justifying Righteousness'—Publication of Crisp's Works—Controversy which ensued—Baxter's 'Scripture Gospel defended'—The Influence of his Writings and Preaching on Antinomianism—Leading Errors of the System, ... 223

CHAPTER X.

WORKS ON BAPTISM, QUAKERISM, AND MILLENARIANISM.

Introductory Remarks—Controversy with Tombes—'Plain Proof of Infant Baptism'—Answered by Tombes—'More Proofs of Infant Church-Membership'—Controversy with

Page

Danvers—'Review of the State of Christian Infants'—Controversy with the Quakers—Early Behavior of the Quakers—'Worcestershire Petition to Parliament'—'Petition Defended'—'Quaker's Catechism'—'Single Sheets' relating to the Quakers—Controversy with Beverley on the Millennium—Account of Beverley—'The Glorious Kingdom of Christ described'—Answered by Beverley—Baxter's 'Reply'—Conclusion, ... 246

CHAPTER XI.

POLITICAL AND HISTORICAL WORKS.

Introductory Observations—'Humble advice'—'Holy Commonwealth'—Origin and Design of the Work—Involved the Author in much Trouble—The Political Principles which it avows—Recalled by Baxter—Motives for doing so—'Church History of Bishops'—Attacked by Morice—'True History of Bishops and Councils defended'—'Breviat of the Life of Mrs. Baxter'—'Penitent Confession'—Conduct of Long towards Baxter—'Reliquiæ Baxterianæ'—Character of this Work—Imperfectly Edited by Sylvester—Calamy's Account of it, and its Reception—His Abridgement of it—controversy to which it led, ... 246

CHAPTER XII.

DEVOTIONAL WORKS.

Introductory Observations—'The Saint's Everlasting Rest'—Written for his own use in the time of Sickness—Composed in Six Months—Notices of Brook, Pym, and Hampden, whose names are omitted in the later Editions—Description, Character, and Usefulness, of the Work—Attacked by Firmin—Baxter's 'Answer to his Exceptions'—'The Divine Life'—Occasioned by a request of the Countess of Balcarras—Its Object and Excellence—'Funeral Sermons' for various Persons—'Treatise of Death'—'Dying Thoughts'—'Reformed Liturgy'—'Paraphrase on the New Testament'—'Monthly Preparations for the Communion'—'Poetical Fragments'—'Additions' to the Fragments—'Paraphrase of the Psalms'—General Review of his Poetry—Conclusion, ... 292

Page

CHAPTER XIII.

GENERAL CONCLUSION.

Baxter, the author of Prefaces to many Books by others—Leaves various Treatises in Manuscript—His extensive Correspondence still preserved—Letter to Increase Mather—Account of Transactions with his Booksellers—Concurrence of Opinions respecting him as a Writer—Barrow—Boyle—Wilkins—Usher—Manton—Bates---Doddridge—-Kippis—Orton—Addison—Johnson-—Granger—Wilberforce—--His own Review of his Writings—Its characteristic candor and fidelity—The magnitude of his Labors as a Writer—The number and variety of his Works—His Readiness—His Style—Sometimes injudicious, both in his Writings and his Conduct—Deficient in the full statement of Evangelical Doctrine—Causes of this Deficiency—Conclusion, . 317

Chronological List of the Works of Baxter, . . 345

THE

LIFE AND WRITINGS

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RICHARD BAXTER.

CHAPTER I.

WORKS ON THE EVIDENCES OF RELIGION.

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Having completed the regular memoir of Baxter's public and private life, we now proceed to what may be regarded as the second part of this work, an historical and critical account of his very numerous writings. These occupied the principal part of his time for many years, and by these he will continue, though dead, to profit the church of God for ages to come. I have previously avoided almost every thing respecting his works, but the enumeration of them in the respective periods in which they appeared. To have noticed them in connexion with his life and times, would either have been destructive of the continuity of the narrative, or to avoid this, the account must have been so brief and general, as greatly to destroy its interest. I have, therefore, reserved the consideration of his writings till the close of his life, that I might give them an entirely distinct department.

The remark which is commonly made respecting authors, that they are chiefly to be known by their writings, is only to a limited extent applicable to Baxter. The former part of this work shows, that independently of his writings, he would have been known to posterity as one of the most considerable men of his times, in the class to which he belonged. He took an active part in all those transactions that distinguished the religious body with which he was connected, and whose affairs often involved the politics and interests of the nation at large. His

influence among his brethren throughout the country, the respect in which he was held by the government, his popularity as a preacher, and the sufferings which he endured, all prove that his title to celebrity does not exclusively rest on his published works. He was not a mere recluse student, or a professional writer; but an active, laborious, and public-spirited man.

Still, the writings of Baxter, which formed so important a portion of those labors in which he so long engaged, were regarded by himself as among the chief means of his usefulness, and furnish us with such a comprehensive view of his mind, that they are justly entitled, in a life of him, to the most ample consideration. By their means, too, his usefulness has been extended and perpetuated beyond the period of his own existence, and far beyond the immediate sphere of his personal labors.

Baxter lived at a time when the literature of Great Britain was influenced in an extraordinary degree by the peculiar circumstances of a civil and ecclesiastical nature, which then occurred; after it had made considerable progress in some departments, but before it had acquired that fixed character, and definite form, which it assumed in the course of the following century. For a long period after the Reformation, the chief subject which occupied the attention of the theological writers of England was the Popish controversy. They judged it then necessary to act both offensively and defensively towards the church of Rome; to maintain the grounds on which the reformed church separated from that corrupt system; and to show that its doctrine, ceremonies, and genius, were all at variance with Christianity. English divinity was then also a new thing; hence it became of more importance to supply a wholesome pabulum, than to expend much labor in dressing it; to furnish the converts from Rome with food of such a quality as would most effectually perserve them from longing after the delicacies of the imperial strumpet.

Out of the controversy, respecting the principles of the Reformation, arose the puritanical and the nonconformist debates. Many, from the beginning, were not content to stop at Canterbury; they conceived that the principles of the Reformation required them to proceed further; they wished to divest themselves of every rag and relic which had belonged to the mother of abominations; and sought to save their souls, not merely by a speedy, but by a far-distant flight from her. Hence the questions about imposition, ecclesiastical authority, church government, forms and vestments. The influence of the court, which was never reformed, except in name, and the timid and worldly policy of church rulers, were constantly opposed to too wide a separation from Rome.

From this state of things sprang the nonconformist separation from the Anglican church, and the numerous discussions which occupied so large a portion of our theological literature down to the times of Baxter. No period of rest and liberty had really been enjoyed. The public mind had come to no settled conclusions on many important points. Debates on matters apparently trifling, were often fiercely maintained, because they implied a diversity of opinion on other things of far more importance than themselves.

Where much oppression was exercised on the one hand, and much suffering endured on the other; in the one case a constant struggle to maintain authority, and in the other to secure existence; it would be vain to expect the refinements and delicacies of literature. Biblical science, profound and elegant theological disquisition, the exercises of taste and fancy, in reference to religion, could not flourish in such circumstances. Among the Puritans and Nonconformists, especially, these things are not to be looked for. They were men born to suffering and to combat. Accustomed to the din of war from their infancy, they insensibly acquired its language, and something of its spirit. Their polemics were a part of their existence; their sufferings sometimes chastened, but more frequently roused their spirits. Hence they studied not so much the polish of the weapon as its temper; and were more careful to maintain their sentiments, than fastidious in the mode of expressing them.

Their writings were, from these circumstances, in a great measure, limited to two departments, practical and controversial; the former including all that was felt to be necessary for the support of the Christian life in times of peculiar distress and peril; the latter, all that was deemed necessary in self-defence or vindication, or for the promotion of those principles, on account of which they were exposed to great tribulation. In both these departments they almost exhaust the subjects which they discuss. They brought forward both argument and consolation in masses. They had neither time nor disposition to prune or abridge. It was often necessary to meet the adversary with the weapon which could be immediately seized, or most effectively employed; and as the appetite for instruction was voracious, the supply was required to be abundant, rather than of the finest quality.

"The agitated state of surrounding circumstances gave them continual proof of the instability of all things temporal; and inculcated on them the necessity of seeking a happiness which might be independent of external things. They thus practically learned the vanity and nothingness of life, except in its relation to eternity; and they declared to their fellow-creatures the mysteries of the kingdom of God, with the tone of men who knew that the lightest word which they spoke outweighed in the

balance of reason, as well as of the sanctuary, the value of all earth's plans, and politics, and interests. They were upon high and firm ground. They stood in the midst of that tempestuous ocean, secure on the rock of ages; and as they uttered to those around them their invitations or remonstrances, or consolations, they thought not of the tastes, but of the necessities of men,—they thought only of the difference between being lost and being saved, and they cried aloud, and spared not.

"There is, no doubt, a great variety of thought, and feeling, and expression, to be met with in the theological writers of that class; but deep and solemn seriousness is the common character of them all. They seem to have felt much. Religion was not allowed to remain as an unused theory in their heads; they were forced to live on it as their food, and to have recourse to it as their only strength and comfort. Hence their thoughts are never given as abstract views: they are always deeply impregnated with sentiment. Their style reminds us of the light which streams through the stained and storied windows of an ancient cathedral. It is not light merely, but light modified by the rich hues, and the quaint forms, and the various incidents of the pictured medium through which it passes: so these venerable worthies do not merely give us truth, but truth in its historical application to the various struggles, and difficulties, and dejections, of their strangely-chequered lives." [a]

These beautiful sentences accurately characterise the writings of the Puritans and Nonconformists in general, while they justly explain the cause of those peculiarities by which they are distinguished.

From the time of the civil wars, another circumstance affected the character of our theological writing. The restraints on the press, and consequently on the minds of men, being then taken away, every man who began to breathe the air of freedom, and who deemed himself capable of putting his thoughts together, judged that he had a call to do so. There was no longer any fear of the Star Chamber or High Commission. A nation of writers was born in a day. Sects increased, controversies multiplied, the press teemed with an innumerable progeny

> 'Hourly conceived,
> And hourly born;'

whose nature partook of the quality of the circumstances which gave them birth. They were crude, ill-formed, and misshaped; and capable, for the most part, of only an ephemeral existence. "Then," as Milton says, "was the time in special, to write and speak what might help to the further discussing of matters in

(a) Erskine's 'Introductory Essay to Baxter's Saint's Rest,' pp. 7,..

agitation. The temple of Janus, with his controversial faces, might not insignificantly be regarded as set open. All the winds of doctrine were let loose to play upon the earth; but truth was prepared to grapple with falsehood, and sustained no injury in a free and open encounter." [b]

Of the infinite and motley generation of writers thus produced, but a small number of master spirits could be expected to survive that oblivion to which the great body was inevitably doomed; and even these could not escape injury from the bad qualities of those circumstances by which they were constantly surrounded. Only a few men of any age are destined for immortality on earth; the far greater number must always be forgotten. Spencer, Shakspeare, Bacon, Milton, and a few others, are the men of their respective periods, to whom alone almost the world of intellect looks back with admiration, as giving character and importance to the times in which they lived.

Hooker, and Hall, Taylor, Barrow, and Chillingworth, Owen, Baxter, and Howe, occupy a similar place among the religious writers of their respective times. The great majority of their contemporaries have already ceased to exist as authors; and even a more select class are slowly floating to an oblivion which certainly awaits them. The principal productions of the above, and perhaps of a few more writers, relate to matters of universal perpetual interest, which render it improbable that they will ever be left behind by the stream of time. Their principles are founded in immutable truth, while the strength of their intellectual powers, or the brilliancy of their imaginations, are not likely to be surpassed by any of the future race of mortals.

But even they were infected or influenced by the circumstances to which we have adverted. None of them are faultless. If they are distinguished for their splendid qualities, they are also strongly marked by deformities and vices. They wrote too much, and therefore must often have written carelessly. They entered deeply into the controversies of the times, and hence caught something of their tone and spirit. They knew not when to stop, or to consider their subject done. They choke their pages with learned quotations, and load them with marginal stuffings, which often savor more of conceit and pedantry than tend to the reader's edification. They studied impression rather than beauty, and often astonish us by the rugged grandeur of their conceptions, rather than please by the felicity of their language, or the harmony of their periods.

These remarks apply most fully and particularly to Baxter, as a writer. He posseses all the good and high qualities which have been ascribed to the choice spirits with whom he ranked.

(b) Areopagetica, Prose Works, p. 394. Edit. 1697.

He was inferior to none of them in fertility of mind, loftiness of genius, or versatility of talent. He wrote more than any of his brethren; and more, of what he did write, continues to be read and admired. But if he partook of their excellencies, he also shared largely in their faults; the former belonged properly to the man, the latter to his circumstances.

Baxter wrote both voluminously and on almost every topic of religion. His works form a system and library of themselves. Instead, therefore, of reviewing them in the chronological order of their publication, I have divided them into classes, to each of which I have devoted a chapter. Following the best arrangement I could adopt, under the several heads of—Works on the Evidences of Religion—On the Doctrines of Religion—On Conversion—On Christian Experience—On Christian Ethics—On Catholic Communion—On Nonconformity—On Popery—On Antinomianism—On the Baptist, Quaker, and Millennarian Controversies—Historical and Political Works—Devotional, Expository, and Poetical Works; some account will be found of every thing which Baxter published.

By pursuing this course, a more accurate view may be obtained of his genius and labors as a writer: while the reader may make his own selection of topics, on which to consult the opinions of this eminent man. In general, I have not deemed it necessary to present an analysis of his works. This would have been impracticable within the bounds of my undertaking, and perhaps uninteresting to the reader. I have, however, always represented their nature and design; the circumstances in which they were produced, and any known effects or consequences which arose from them. In this examination of his writings, various occurrences, omitted in the regular narrative of his life, will be found, and notices of many of his contempoaries, both friends and opponents, will be given. The remainder of this chapter will, therefore, be devoted to the works on the Evidences of Religion.

The evidences of religion do not always occupy that place in the attention of men, which their great importance merits. The truth of revelation is so much taken for granted among Christians, that few, comparatively, give themselves the trouble of examining into the grounds of their faith. But the mind of Baxter was so constituted that it could not be satisfied without the most rigid examination of that subject, which was of all others the most important to him. He was early affected with doubts and difficulties, to remove which, he instituted the most rigid inquiry into the truth of religion. He made it his business to sift and weigh every argument, and to give to the various kinds and degrees of evidence, only that weight in the scale which intrin-

sically belonged to them. On this subject, the following passage from his own life is entitled to attention.

"Among truths certain in themselves, all are not equally certain unto me; and even of the mysteries of the Gospel, I must needs say with Mr. Richard Hooker, in his 'Eccles. Polit.,' 'that whatever men may pretend, the subjective certainty cannot go beyond the objective evidence; for it is caused thereby, as the print on the wax is caused by that on the seal.' I do more of late, therefore, than ever, discern a necessity of a methodical procedure in maintaining the doctrine of Christianity, and of beginning at natural verities, as presupposed fundamentally to supernatural; though God may, when he pleases, reveal all at once, and even natural truths by supernatural revelation. It is a marvellous great help to my faith, to find it built on so sure foundations, and so consonant to the law of nature. I am not so foolish as to pretend my certainty to be greater than it is, merely because it is a dishonor to be less certain; nor will I by shame be kept from confessing the infirmities, which those have as much as I, who hypocritically reproach me with them.

"My certainty that I am a man, is before my certainty that there is a God; for *quod facit notum, est magis notum*. My certainty that there is a God, is greater than my certainty that he requireth love and holiness of his creature; my certainty of this is greater than my certainty of the life of reward and punishment hereafter; my certainty of that is greater than my certainty of the endless duration of it, and of the immortality of individuate souls; my certainty of the Deity is greater than my certainty of the Christian faith; my certainty of the Christian faith, in its essentials, is greater than my certainty of the perfection and infallibility of all the holy Scriptures; my certainty of that is greater than my certainty of the meaning of many particular texts, and so of the truth of many particular doctrines, or of the canonicalness of some certain books. So that as you see by what gradations my understanding doth proceed, so also that my certainty differeth as the evidences differ. And they that will begin all their certainty with that of the truth of the Scripture, as the *principium cognoscendi*, may meet me at the same end; but they must give me leave to undertake to prove to a heathen or infidel, the being of a God, and the necessity of holiness, and the certainty of a reward or punishment, even while yet he denieth the truth of Scripture, and in order to his believing it to be true." [c]

Whatever may be thought of the necessity of pursuing the above plan, in the discussion of the evidences of Christianity,

(c) Life, part i. p. 123.

there is much justice in the train of Baxter's argument. The man who looked so narrowly and cautiously for proof of every thing that he believed, was undoubtedly well qualified to write on the subject of evidence, for the benefit of others.

In directing our attention to the writings of Baxter on the evidences of religion, the first work which presents itself, both in the order of time and that of nature, is his 'Unreasonableness of Infidelity.'[d] This work is dedicated to Lord Broghill, then Lord President of the Council of State for the affairs of Scotland. Baxter, we have already seen, was well acquainted with him: he speaks of him, in this dedication, very respectfully, as a religious man, while he gives him, as was his custom, some very wholesome admonition. In this respect, Baxter's dedications are worthy of imitation. They are polite and courteous, but never flattering or adulatory. He knew how to point a compliment, but never forgot, in addressing others, what was due to his own character, as a man of God. There is much beauty as well as fidelity in the address to Lord Broghill, who made a considerable figure in the political world for many years. The occasion of writing and publishing this book, which appeared in 1655, he tells us, was his forming "a troublesome acquaintance with Clement Writer, of Worcester,[e] an ancient man, who had long seemed a forward professor of religiousness, and of a good conversation, but had been perverted to he knew not what. A Seeker he professed to be, but was either a juggling Papist, or an infidel; more probably the latter. He had written a scornful book against the ministry, called 'Jus Divinum Presbyterii,' and afterwards, two more against the Scriptures and me. His assertion to me was, that no man is bound to believe in Christ, who doth not see confirming miracles with his own eyes."[f]

It is very instructive to find the grand argument against Christianity, of which David Hume supposed himself to be the inventor, anticipated by a fanatical Seeker of the times of the Commonwealth. Mr. Hume's favorite dogma was, that a miracle is incapable of such proof from human testimony, as to entitle it to belief. Clement Writer's idea seems to have been, "that whatever reality might have belonged to the miracles of Christ, they cannot be proved so as to oblige us." Campbell successfully demolished the ablest and most acute sceptic of

(d) Works, vol. xx.

(e) A curious account of Clement Writer is given by Edwards in his 'Gangrena.' In his usual style of invective, he calls him "an arch heretic—a fearful apostate—an old wolf—and a subtile man." He represents him as a materialist and mortalist—a denier of the divinity of the Scriptures, and of the rights of the ministry, unless possessed of apostolic powers.—Part i. p. 27.

(f) Life, part i. p. 116.

modern times; Baxter was no less successful in overturning his adversary. [g]

He intended it also as a supplement to the second part of his 'Saint's Rest,' which treats of the proofs of the truth and certain futurity of our rest, and attempts to show that the Scriptures which promise it, are the perfect, infallible word of God. Although the propriety of referring to the truth of the divine testimony as the foundation of hope in the rest of God cannot be called in question, the necessity of devoting the fourth part of a devotional treatise to an inquiry into the truth of religion, is very questionable. This was objected to at the time, as appears from his preface to this part of the latter editions of his 'Rest.' He did not alter the book, however; but the objections appear to have led him to discuss the subject in this separate treatise.

'The Unreasonableness of Infidelity,' is divided into four parts. In the first, he considers the Spirit's extrinsic witness to Christianity, with the question proposed to him by Clement Writer, whether the miraculous works of Christ and his disciples do oblige those to believe who never saw them? In the second, he considers the Spirit's internal witness to the truth of Christianity. In the third, he furnishes a demonstration that the Spirit and works of Christ were the finger of God, to prevent what he considered to be the sin against the Holy Ghost; and in the last, he endeavors to show that the arrogancy of reason and the pride of ignorance, are the great causes of men's infidelity and quarrelling with the Word of God.

Such is the outline of the plan pursued in this very valuable treatise. It evidently embraces, with one exception, which I shall afterwards notice, the great leading arguments on which Christianity is founded, and by which it may be morally demonstrated to have come from God. He naturally and properly commences with the external, or what he calls the extrinsic testimony of the Spirit, which he considers to be the miraculous works performed by Christ and his apostles. These, from their magnitude, from their number and variety, from the circumstances in which they were performed, and from the overwhelming conviction they produced at the time, satisfactorily prove that the Christian revelation is from heaven and not from men. The following appears to me to place the argument from miracles in a very forcible point of view.

"If any shall seal the doctrine that he bringeth in the name of God, with the testimony of such numerous, evident, undeni-

(g) As a piece of beautiful argument, there is, perhaps, no book in the English language better entitled to the reader's attention, than 'The Treatise on Miracles,' by Dr Campbell. As a mere intellectual exercise, it will richly repay a careful examination.

able miracles, it is the highest proof of the truth of his doctrine, that flesh and blood can expect. And if God do not give us sufficient help to discover a falsehood in the testimony, we must take it for his voice and truth. For if God shall let men or devils use the highest mark of a divine testimony to confirm a lie, while they pretend it to be divine, and do not control this, he leaveth men utterly remediless. For we cannot go up into heaven to see what hand these things are wrought by. We are certain they cannot be done without divine permission and commission; we are sure that God is the true, just, merciful Governor of the world; and as sure as it belongeth to a Rector to promulgate, as well as enact his own laws, they cannot oblige us, till promulgated, that is, sufficiently revealed. And if he shall suffer any to say, 'God sent me to you on this message, and to back this affirmation with such a stream of miracles through a whole age by many thousand hands, and shall not any way contradict them, nor give us sufficient help to discover the delusion, then it must needs be taken for God's own act, seeing by office he is our Rector; or else that God hath given up the world to the dispose and government of the devil. Now, let any man of right reason judge whether it be possible that the just and merciful God, being naturally our governor as we are his creatures, should give permission or commission to the devil to deceive the world in his name, by changing and working against the very course of nature, and by means that no man can possibly try; and so, leave his creature remedilessly to be misled and perish."[h]

The theological scholar will scarcely require to be informed that in this passage the substance of the argument of Farmer's celebrated treatise on miracles, is comprised. The object of that able and unanswerable work is to show, that miracles prove the truth of the doctrine, not the doctrine the reality of the miracles; and that in every case in which they have been really performed, they have been wrought by a divine agency, and in proof of a message or testimony sent from God. I am far from thinking that Baxter has maintained his argument with the same clearness and consistency as Farmer: but making allowance for the manner in which he was accustomed to treat every subject, it is precisely of the same nature, and managed with distinguished ability.

Baxter concedes to Satan a power which Farmer denies to him—that of operating on human creatures in a supernatural manner. In this very book, he tells numerous apparition and ghost stories; but they are not introduced to prove that Satan has the power of working miracles; but to show from the oppo-

(h) Works, vol. xx. p. 333.

site nature of Christ's works and his, that they could not proceed from the same quarter. It seems to me very evident, though Baxter did not pursue it, that the argument in the passage extracted above, goes all the length of Farmer.

The view which he took of miracles as the grand testimony of the Spirit to the truth, led him to consider the nature of that channel through which this species of evidence has been brought down to us. Here he takes up the historical testimony, or the universal and unbroken tradition, not of the church, but of all kinds of moral and historic evidence, that the Scriptures in our hands are the writings of the persons whose names they bear, and that the facts which they record have been recognised or admitted from the very beginning. The argument in this and the preceding part is maintained with great power, and scarcely inferior, in clearness and cogency, to the masterly reasoning of Paley.

It is singular that, in treating the external evidence, he takes no notice of the subject of prophecy. He assigns no reason for this omission; and therefore I apprehend he merely regarded it as unnecessary to the strength of his argument, and would not allow himself to be diverted from its regular prosecution by the introduction of another topic, which would have required very extended consideration, and perhaps have distracted both his own mind and that of his readers. And as Writer had not adverted to the difficulties connected with prophecy, but to those belonging to miracles, he did not feel called to enter on that subject.

In the second treatise in the volume, he examines very particularly the Spirit's internal testimony to the truth of the Gospel. By this intrinsic evidence he does not mean, the proofs which the Scriptures themselves furnish of their divine origin; what Owen calls their "self-evidencing power;" but "Christ's witness within us," which he regards "the believer's special advantage against the temptations to infidelity." It is founded on "He that believeth hath the witness in himself," [i] (1 John v. 10,) a text which has been variously expounded, and which Baxter thinks signifies that those enlightened and holy impressions formed on the soul by the Spirit, become in us a standing testimony or witness for the truth within us, as the word and miracles of Christ are without us. "For none but the sacred Redeemer of the world, approved by the Father, and working by his Spirit,

(i) In this important passage I believe that the apostle uses the word testimony, *μαρτυρια*, by a common figure of speech, for the thing testified. This, as appears from the following verse, is the fact, that believers have eternal life through the Son of God:—"He who believeth this testimony—has that which Christ's undertaking is designed to bestow, viz. eternal life—in himself; it is not an object of future hope, but of present enjoyment," ver. 12. This interpretation is supported by the whole context, and removes every difficulty from the passage.

could do such works as are done on the souls of all that are truly sanctified." This is, in fact, an argument derived from the power and adaptation of Christianity, considered as a moral remedy. It is rather the evidence of experiment than an internal witness. For, after all that can be said on the subject of the inward witness, it resolves itself entirely into the consciousness of the individual that he has truly received the divine testimony, and that the feelings he experiences, and the outward conduct which he pursues, are the result of God's word operating upon him. This experience is often peculiarly satisfactory to the Christian himself, though it will go but little way in convincing unbelievers. On this view of the subject, Baxter says many admirable things. His illustration of the apostle's triumphant challenge, Rom. viii. 35—39, is exceedingly beautiful and appropriate.

It may appear very singular that he should take up the 'Blasphemy of the Holy Ghost,' at such length as he does in this treatise: but he was naturally led to it by the particular view which he takes of the miracles of Christ; his grand object being to show that they were works which could not have been performed by the devil; and that they are, therefore, demonstrative of a divine mission, which whosoever rejects or calumniates must perish. On the nature of the particular sin of which he treats, he perhaps dwells at too great length for his purpose; but he has a great deal on the topic itself which is valuable and interesting. The following passage, in which he sums up his own views of the subject, is worthy of the reader's attention.[k]

"This much is out of doubt with me, that this sin lieth in the rejecting of the objective testimony of the Spirit extraordinarily then attesting Christ's doctrine, as being the highest and last objective remedy of unbelief. The three persons in the blessed trinity have each one their several ways of recovering man, and for the remission of his sin, and there are several ways of sinning against each of them, as men sin against these dispensations. When we had sinned against the Creator and his perfect law, he gave us his Son to be our Redeemer. There was his proper work for our pardon, together with the acceptance of the price of redemption and the giving us into the hands of his Son as his redeemed ones. The Son made satisfaction to justice, and sent forth to the world a conditional pardon under his hand and

(k) Though in possession of Baxter's work when I published my 'Discourses on the Blasphemy against the Holy Spirit,' I had forgotten that he wrote on the subject. Had I thought to have consulted him, I would have availed myself of some of his ideas. For though I do not agree with him in many of his remarks and reasonings, various things which he suggests are worthy of attention; and the reader who chooses to compare the doctrine of the Discourses with the passages quoted in the text, will find that we agree very nearly in our conclusion, as to the character of the offence, and what constitutes its irremissible nature.

seal, with his word and Spirit to persuade them to accept it. This is his work antecedent to our believing. The Spirit enditeth and sealeth this written, delivered pardon, by mighty works, and importuneth the hearts of sinners to accept it. If it be accepted, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, do actually pardon us. If it be not accepted merely as sent by the word of the Son, we sin against the Son by unbelief. If it be not accepted or believed as sealed and urged by the Spirit (yea, or if sealed extrinsically only), then it is the sin against the Spirit, supposing that seal be discerned and considered of, and yet resolvedly rejected. So that here are three, the last remedying means rejected at once. When man was fallen, the Father provideth a sacrifice for his sin, and but one sacrifice; the Son tendereth to us a remedying covenant, and but one such covenant. The Spirit of Christ, especially in his extraordinary works, is the convincing, attesting seal, to draw men to believe, and there is but one such Spirit and seal. He that sinned against the law of works, hath all these remedies in their several orders. But if you refuse this one sacrifice, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin; if you refuse this one remedying covenant, there is no other covenant after it to be expected; and if you refuse this sealing and sanctifying Spirit, which would draw you into the covenant, there is no other Spirit or seal to be expected. This much is out of doubt; and therefore, he that finally continueth to refuse this sacrifice, covenant, and seal of the Spirit, shall perish for ever."[l]

The last part of the work on infidelity, strikes at the grand root of the evil: the pride of man's intellect or reason, and the obstinacy of his ignorance. It belongs to the heart rather than to the understanding. This was the case in the days of our Lord and his apostles; it was the case in the days of Baxter; and it is exemplified in a still greater degree now than formerly. There is less argumentative or speculative infidelity; but probably much more sullen, determined, and high-minded opposition to the word of God, than at any former period of the world's history. The light is greater, and hence the resistance to that light must, to be successful, be the more resolute.

To supply what Baxter deemed the deficiencies of the work we have now considered, he published in 1667, 'The Reasons of the Christian Religion.'[m] This is a quarto volume, of six hundred pages, on which the author must have bestowed a large portion of attention. There are two dedications prefixed to it, one addressed to the Christian reader, with another to the "hypocrite reader." It is worthy of observation, that he assigns, as one

(l) Works, xx. 251.—This part of the work on Infidelity, viz. 'The Treatise on the Sin against the Holy Ghost,' appeared in German, some time after its publication in English.—*Walchii Bib. Theol. Sel.* tom. i. p. 254.

(m) Works, vols. xx. and xxi.

reason for the writing of this work, his desire to promote the "conversion of idolaters and infidels to God and to the Christian faith." At a period when few were directing their thoughts to the state of the heathen world, it appears from various parts of the writings of Baxter, that his mind was deeply occupied with it. As we have already seen, beside being the friend of Boyle, he was the correspondent of Elliot, and the ardent admirer of his zeal and his success. He expresses in one of these dedications, the great pain he felt at the "doleful thought that five parts of the world were still heathens and Mahometans; and that Christian princes and preachers did no more for their recovery." "The opening of the true method for such a work," he says, "is the highest part of my design."

How far his work is adapted to this end, is a different question. It is divided into two parts: 'Of Natural Religion, or Godliness;' and 'Of Christianity and Supernatural Religion.' In the first part, he considers what man is in himself, a creature of sense and reason, "a living weight, having an active power, an understanding to guide it, and a will to command it." What he is in relation to things beneath him, to his fellow-creatures around him, and to the great First Cause above him. This leads him to consider what this Cause is in itself—God; and what he is in relation to his creatures, especially man; in which he treats of him as our Owner, Governor, Benefactor; and of man's obligation to God, as his End or chief Good. He then discusses the nature of man's present condition, the evidences of a future state of retribution; and the natural light we have of God's mercy, and of the means of recovery.

From this brief sketch of the plan pursued in this part of the treatise, the reader will perceive that it is in fact a dissertation on natural religion; or, an attempt to ascertain how far men may become acquainted with God, with their own duties, and with a future state, independent of revelation. The argument is conducted with very considerable ability and regularity, and displays a great deal of thought, and like, all the other works of Baxter, a great fund of reading. On the nature and uses of natural religion, considerable diversity of opinion prevails. It seems generally to have been overlooked, that man has never been left entirely to the guidance of his own unassisted reason in the affair of religion. From the beginning, there was a revelation of the character of God, beyond that which belonged to the mere works of God. In paradise God conversed with Adam, and gave him information above what his unassisted faculties might have derived from the external manifestations of divine power and goodness. These original communications were never entirely lost; and hence, though the invisible things of God may be understood from the things which he has made, so that

men are left without excuse, the responsibility of the creature must be considered as greatly increased by the superadded revelation, though it has been in many instances thoughtlessly or wantonly lost. Baxter's 'Reasons' may be regarded as preparing the way for the unanswerable work of Halyburton, 'Natural Reason insufficient; and Revealed, neccessary to Man's Happiness in his present state.' A book far more satisfactory than any other which has yet been published on this part of the deistical controversy. [n]

The second part of Baxter's work is devoted to a regular examination of the evidences of Christianity considered as a revelation from God, and is altogether a very able performance. Contrary to the plan of some works on the evidences of revelation, which leave out every thing concerning the matter or subject of the revelation itself; Baxter makes a full statement of the nature and properties of the Christian religion, and of its "congruities;" or in other words, its suitableness to our natural notions of God, and its adaptation to our own characters and wants. He then proceeds to discuss the "witness of Jesus Christ; or, the demonstrative evidence of his verity and authority." This he arranges in four parts: Prophecy, or antecedent testimony to his Messiahship—His personal character, as he is the image of God in his person, life, and doctrine—His miracles and those of his disciples—And the constant evidence of his power and character in the salvation of men. Beside these, there are many collateral topics examined, and a multitude of difficulties, supposed to belong to the Christian faith, met and resolved.

It is not practicable, within the limits to which I am under the necessity of restricting myself, to convey a full idea of the valuable reasonings of this work: but even the imperfect outline now given, may show that it is well entitled to the reader's attention. Some of the peculiarities of Baxter's style and manner of treating subjects, exist in it; but it is full of the indications of his genius, originality, and powerful intellect. His piety also richly imbues the whole. It contains a prayer, which, were it not too long to be quoted here, I would introduce at large, as one of the sublimest pieces of devotion in the English language. I do not know whether most to admire the holy ardor which it breathes, the power by which it is sustained, or the felicitous language in which it is expressed. The concluding paragraph I will venture to give, entreating the reader to examine the whole. Addressing the divine Spirit, he says:

(n) Halyburton's work was published in 4to, in 1714, after the death of the author, which took place in 1712. He was professor of divinity in the University of St. Andrew; and was no less distinguished for his sound and ardent piety, than by his masculine understanding and his extensive learning,

"As thou art the agent and advocate of Jesus my Lord, O plead his cause effectually in my soul against the suggestions of Satan and my unbelief; and finish his healing, saving work, and let not the flesh or world prevail. Be in me the resident witness of my Lord, the author of my prayers, the spirit of adoption, the seal of God, and the earnest of mine inheritence. Let not my nights be so long and my days so short, nor sin eclipse those beams which have often illuminated my soul. Without thee, books are senseless scrawls, studies are dreams, learning is a glow-worm, and wit is but wantonness, impertinence, and folly. Transcribe those sacred precepts on my heart, which by thy dictates and inspirations are recorded in thy holy word. I refuse not thy help for tears and groans; but O shed abroad that love upon my heart, which may keep it in a continual life of love. Teach me the work which I must do in heaven; refresh my soul with the delights of holiness, and the joys which arise from the believing hopes of the everlasting joys. Exercise my heart and tongue in the holy praises of my Lord. Strengthen me in sufferings; and conquer the terrors of death and hell. Make me the more heavenly, by how much the faster I am hastening to heaven; and let my last thoughts, words, and works on earth, be likest to those which shall be my first in the state of glorious immortality; where the kingdom is delivered up to the Father, and God will for ever be All, and in all; of whom, and through whom, and to whom, are all things, to whom be glory for ever.—Amen."

In a long appendix to the preceding work, he discusses the doctrine of the soul's immortality, and immateriality; and in 1672, he published a small duodecimo volume, entitled, 'More Reasons for the Christian Religion, and no Reason against it;'[o] designed as a second appendix to his work on the Evidences. Part of this little treatise is intended as an answer to an unknown letter-writer, who charged the holy Scriptures with contradictions; and the chief part consists of animadversions on Lord Herbert's work 'De Veritate,' which had not met with any answer previously in this country. Herbert was the earliest formal deistical writer produced by England, whose labors have attracted any attention. The first edition of his work 'De Veritate' appeared at Paris in 1624. It was republished in London, along with his treatise 'De Causis Errorum,' and his 'Religio Laici,' in 1683. His work 'De Religione Gentilium,' which Baxter does not appear to have seen, was printed at Amsterdam, in 1663. Herbert's great object seems to have

(o) Works, vol. xxi.

been, to overthrow revelation, and substitute what he called natural religion, or deism, in its place.

Baxter addresses this little work, in a letter written with great delicacy, to Sir Henry Herbert, influenced, he says, "by his personal, ancient obligations to him; by his approved wisdom and moderation, in the ways of charity and peace, in these trying times; and by his relation to the noble author on whose writings he animadverts. As it is your honor," he says, "to be the brother of so learned and ingenious a lord, and the brother of so excellently holy, as well as learned and ingenious a person, Mr. George Herbert; so it obligeth me the more to give you an account of this animadversion."

He complains of "the sad case of many of his acquaintance, and of the increase of infidelity of late, especially among debauched, sensual gallants," whose increase was chiefly to be ascribed to the profligacy of the reigning monarch, and the dissoluteness of the court. Baxter points out the true source of Herbert's infidelity; and, indeed, of all the infidelity of the Christian world—the moral state of the heart. "Had so great a wit," he says, "had but *the internal conditions* due to such an intellectual apprehension, as his and your holy and excellent brother had, no doubt but our supernatural revelations and verities would have appeared evident to him, and possessed his soul with as sweet a gust, and fervent, ascendant, holy love, as breatheth in G. Herbert's poems; and would have made them as clear to him in their kind, as some of his *notitiæ communes*. The truth is, as he was too low for us, who number not our divine revelations with the *verisimilia*, but with the certain verities; so he was too high for the atheistical sensualists of his age."

Baxter treats his lordship with great respect and candor; but remarks very freely on his fallacies, inconsistencies, and the imperfections of the scheme which he would substitute in the place of God's revelation. Leland makes honorable mention of Baxter, as the first of our English writers who replied to Lord Herbert. It is not to be considered, however, a full answer. Baxter was followed by Locke, who, both in his 'Treatise on the Human Understanding,' and in his work on the 'Reasonableness of Christianity,' meets the Baron of Cherbury. Whitby also wrote a very excellent tract on 'The Verity and Usefulness of the Christian Revelation,' in which his lordship's system is considered. But the grand and conclusive reply to the father of our English Deists, is, the work of Professor Halyburton, referred to in a former page. It has alleged every thing necessary to be said on this subject.

In 1682, Baxter published, in a small 12mo volume, two treatises, 'Of the Immortality of Man's Soul, and of the Nature of it, and of other Spirits.' The first is in the form of a letter, addressed to an unknown doubter, whose epistle he prefixes; the other is a reply to Dr. Henry More's animadversions addressed to Baxter in a private letter, and afterwards published by him in the second edition of Joseph Glanvil's 'Sadducismus Triumphatus; or, History of Apparitions.' In the preface to these discourses, he refers to his former works, the 'Reasons of the Christian Religion,' and the 'Unreasonableness of Infidelity,' and thus connects them together. The appendix to his 'Reasons of the Christian Religion,' is, in fact, a labored "defence of the soul's immortality against the Somatists and Epicureans and other pseudo-philosophers;" of which this small treatise is, therefore, but a continuation. His great object is to prove the immateriality and immortality of the soul; not by the testimony of revelation; but by the light of nature and metaphysical arguments. For this kind of discussion Baxter was peculiarly fitted by his natural acuteness, and the metaphysical character of his mind. He could "distinguish things that differ" more readily than most men of his own or any other age; and the reader, who attentively examines these treatises, will find that most of the arguments usually derived from reason, and from the acknowledged properties of mind and matter, are adduced by him.

The doctrine of the immateriality and immortality of the soul, was first attacked in English, as far as I know, in a pamphlet, published at Amsterdam, in 1643, and re-published, enlarged, at London, in 1655. 'Man's Mortallitie, wherein 'tis proved, both theologically and philosophically, that whole man (as a rational creature) is a compound wholly mortal, contrary to that common distinction of soul and body: and that the present going of the soul into Heaven or Hell is a meer fiction: and that at the resurrection is the beginning of our immortality, and then, actual condemnation and salvation, and not before,' &c. The author signs himself "R. O." Who or what he was, Archdeacon Blackburn says, cannot now be traced. I believe he was Richard Overton, one of the fierce republicans of the commonwealth. The production is not destitute of talent, but is altogether sceptical in its nature and tendency. It was answered in an anonymous pamphlet, 'The Prerogative of Man; or, his soul's immortality and high perfection defended, and explained against the rash and rude conceptions of a late writer, who hath inconsiderately ventured to impugn it.' 4to, 1645. Blackburn, who could not give the title of this pamphlet, sneers at the author of it, and represents it as very feeble. I think differently; it is well written, and destitute neither of learning

nor argument. Baxter's small treatises on this subject were written many years after these productions, so that he had probably forgotten them, if indeed he ever saw them among the ephemeræ of the Commonwealth.

The Book of Glanvil, published by More, is a very singular production, and in many points resembles Baxter's book on apparitions and witches, noticed at the end of this chapter. The first part treats of the possibility of witches; the second, of their real existence. It is full of scriptural and philosophical arguments according to the views of the author, and abounds with ghost stories of all descriptions. Many of these are very striking, and authenticated by the names of the parties. The book originated in an occurrence at the house of John Mumpeson of Tedworth; which was, for some time, disturbed by the beating of an invisible drum every night. This happened in 1663. Glanvil published in 1666 some philosophical considerations, touching the being of witches and witchcraft; which laid the foundation of a great deal of discussion, that lasted till his death. As an apology for Baxter, it should be mentioned, that Glanvil was a clergyman, a chaplain in ordinary to his Majesty, and one of the first and most useful members of the Royal Society. Anthony Wood says, "that he was a person of more than ordinary parts: of a quick, warm, spruce, and gay fancy; and more lucky, at least in his own judgment, in his first hints and thoughts of things, than in his after notions, examined and digested by longer and more mature deliberation."[p] Baxter was acquainted with Glanvil, though after the Restoration they pursued very different courses. He speaks of him, in his 'Defence of the Mere Nonconformists,' with considerable respect, though he disapproved of part of his conduct. Among the Baxter MSS. there are several letters from Glanvil to Baxter, full of the warmest expressions of affection and admiration. In one of them, he begs Baxter's acceptance of the publication referred to; in another he acknowledges the honor done him by Baxter, in sending him his manuscript answer to the Bishop of Worcester. There is also a long letter, full of curious learning, in defence of the pre-existence of souls; a doctrine which Glanvil believed, and to which he would gladly have made Baxter a convert. He appears to have been an amiable, philosophical enthusiast.

Dr. Henry More possessed great personal excellence, but had a very peculiar conformation of mind. Deeply read in the philosophy of Plato, the mysteries of the Cabalists, and a profound admirer of the Cartesian philosophy; he became the most learned mystic of his own, or perhaps of any other

(p) Athen. Oxon. vol. ii. p. 496.

time; and one of the deepest students of the apocalyptic visions and prophecies. He was learned, but credulous; pious, but superstitious; philosophical, and yet the sport of vulgar fancies, and popular errors. His writings on philosophical, theological, and mystical subjects, are numerous, and were extensively read at the time; though now regarded rather as objects of curiosity, than sought after on account of their utility. Between More and Baxter there appears to have been some personal intimacy, and in several respects they were congenial spirits. In the second edition of Glanvil's 'Sadducismus Triumphatus,' published by More, he inserted a private letter from Baxter, with some animadversions on it, which led to what Baxter calls his "placid collation." According to More's account, Baxter was a "Psychopyrist, that is, a philosopher, who holds all created spirits to be a kind of more pure and subtile fire." Baxter complains that he held no such notion, but that his language thus interpreted had been entirely misunderstood. The following remarkable passage conveys an obscure idea of his speculations on this nice and difficult subject, and of the nature of the difference between him and More.

"Do you think," he asks, "that the soul carrieth a body out of the body inseparable with it, or only that it receiveth a new body when it passeth out of the old? If the latter, is there any instant of time between the dispossession of the old, and the possession of the new? If any, then the soul is some time without a body; and how can you tell how long? If not, what body is it that you can imagine so ready to receive it without any interposition? I have not been without temptation to over inquisitive thoughts about these matters; and I never had so much ado to overcome any such temptation, as that to the opinion of Averrhoes, that, as extinguished candles go all into one illuminated air, so separated souls go all into one common *anima mundi*, and lose their individuation, and that *materia receptiva individuat;* and then, indeed, your notion would be probable, for the *anima mundi mundum semper animat*, and so my separated soul should be still embodied in the world, and should have its part in the world's animation; but both Scripture and apparitions assure us of the individuation of spirits and separate souls.

"I confess to you that I have often told the Sadducees and infidels that urge seeming impossibilities against the resurrection, and the activity of separate souls for want of organs, that they are not sure that the soul taketh not with it, at its departure hence, some seminal material spirits, etherial and airy; and so that this spirituous or igneous body which it carrieth hence, is a semen to the body which it shall have at the resurrection:

no man knoweth the contrary, and no man knoweth that it is so." [q]

The Christian reader will probably think that there is not much edification to be obtained from these speculations. The immateriality and immortality of the soul, are clearly taught in the sacred Scriptures, whose testimony, on these and many other subjects, is far more satisfactory than all the *a priori*, or metaphysical reasonings of the acutest minds. Baxter himself appears to have felt this, as he says, towards the conclusion of his first treatise: "But all that I have said to you, is but the *least part*, in comparison of the assurance which you may have by the full revelation of Jesus Christ, where the state, the doom, the rewards, and punishment of souls, are asserted."

The last work in this department is intimately connected with the preceding, though the strangest of all Baxter's productions. 'The Certainty of the World of Spirits fully evinced by unquestionable Histories of Apparitions and Witchcrafts, Operations, Voices, &c. Proving the Immortality of Souls, the Malice and Misery of Devils and the Damned, and the Blessedness of the Justified. Written for the Convicton of Sadducees and Infidels.' [r] This treatise appeared in a 12mo volume, in the year 1691, only a few months before the author's death. The subject, however, had long occupied his attention; for his 'Saint's Rest,' written forty years before, contains some things of the same nature. And, indeed, several of his works contain discussions of this kind. It is necessary, however, to hear the author's own account of the origin and design of this publication.

"As to the original of this collection, it had its rise from my own, and other men's need. When God first awakened me to think, with preparing seriousness, of my condition after death, I had not any observed doubts of the reality of spirits, or the immortality of the soul, or of the truth of the Gospel; but all my doubts were about my own renovation and title to that blessed life. But when God had given me peace of conscience, Satan assaulted me with those worse temptations: yet, through God's grace, they never prevailed against my faith; nor did he ever raise in me the least doubt of the being and perfections of God; nor of my duty to love, honor, obey, and trust him; for I still saw that to be an Atheist was to be mad.

"But I found that my faith of supernatural revelation must be more than believing man, and that if it had not a firm

(q) On the Nature of Spirits, pp. 8, 9.

(r) This singular book was translated into German, and published at Nuremberg, in 1731. Several of the stories contained in it came from Germany, so that they would get back to their native country, probably with some improvements.

foundation and rooting, even sure evidence of verity, surely apprehended, it was not like to do those great works that faith had to do, to overcome the world, the flesh, and the devil, and to make my death to be safe and comfortable. Therefore, I found that all confirming helps were useful; and among those of the lower sort, apparitions, and other sensible manifestations of the certain existence of spirits of themselves invisible, were a means that might do much with such as are prone to judge by sense. The uses hereof, I mention before the book, that the reader may know that I write it for practice, and not to please men with the strangeness and novelty of useless stories.

"It is no small number of writers on such subjects that I have read, for near threescore years time from the first occasion; and finding that almost all the Atheists, Sadducees, and infidels, did seem to profess, that were they but sure of the reality of the apparitions and operations of spirits, it would cure them; I thought this the most suitable help for them that have sinned themselves into an incapacity of more rational and excellent arguments. And I have long feared, lest secret unobserved defectiveness in their belief of the immortality of the soul, and the truth of the Scripture, is the great cause of all men's other defects. There lieth usually the unsoundness of worldly hypocrites, where it is prevailing; and thence is the weakness of grace in the best, though it prevail not against their sincerity. By which motives I did, though it displeased some, make it the second part of my book, called, 'The Saint's Rest;' and, afterwards, provoked by Clement Writer, I did it much more fully in a book called 'The Unreasonableness of Infidelity.' After that, provoked by the copy of a paper dispersed in Oxford, said to be Dr. Walker's, questioning the certainty of our religion, and seeing no answer to it come from the university men, I wrote yet more methodically of all, in a book called 'The Reasons of the Christian Religion.' I after added a small discourse, called 'More Reasons for it,' provoked by one that called himself Herbert, in which also I answered the Lord Herbert *De Veritate*. Since then, a nameless Sadducee hath drawn me to publish an answer to him; and in my 'Life of Faith,' and other books, I have handled the same subject. All which I tell the reader, that he may see why I have taken this subject as so necessary, why I am ending my life with the publication of these historical letters and collections, which I dare say have such evidence, as will leave every Sadducee that readeth them, either convinced or utterly without excuse."[s]

To enter on any investigation of the truth of the extraordinary stories of witchcraft, apparitions, and prodigies, contained in this

(s) Preface.

book, would be foreign from the design of these memoirs. It is difficult to account for many of the narratives, as they w re furnished by persons of respectability, on whose veracity, therefore, every dependence may be placed. [t] Many things can be explained by the supposition, that the parties were under the influence of diseased imaginations, and really believed that they saw the things of which they speak. In other cases gross imposition was without doubt practised; and a stricter scrutiny would have detected the imposture and knavery of the parties. Some of the prodigies may be accounted for from the operation of natural causes, many of which have now become familiar to us, and others that are still occult may yet be discovered. Much must be attributed to the credulity of the age. Hence it is the less surprising that Baxter was the subject of it, when we find such men laboring under it as Judge Hale, More, Robert Boyle, and many other eminent individuals. It is not long since the statute book of the country was freed from laws, the operation of which, with the superstition of all classes, brought many an innocent individual to a horrible death. [u]

I am afraid that Baxter's object in compiling and authenticating these stories, the conviction of the Sadducees, has not been accomplished by them. It will commonly be found, I apprehend, that if men do not believe Moses and the prophets, neither will they believe on the authority of "witches, hobgoblins, or chimeras dire." It is not from want of evidence that they do not believe, but from dislike to religion, which predisposes them to reject or to trifle with all evidence that the nature of the subject admits or requires.

Various causes may be assigned for the superstitious feelings, and the dread of supernatural beings, which generally belong to an unenlightened state of society. There seems naturally to exist in man, not only "a longing after immortality," but also a kind of dread of that world of spirits to which a part of his nature is allied. With this is combined a strong desire to know what belongs to that state, and its mysterious transactions. Certain passages of Scripture, misunderstood, have tended to nourish the idea, that, as in early times,

(t) Without referring to the foreigners, whose accounts are introduced by Baxter in this volume, there are narratives furnished by many persons of eminence in our own country. Lord Broghill, the Duke of Lauderdale, the Rev. Thos. Emlyn, of Dublin, and Dr. Dan. Williams.

(u) Honorable mention ought to be made of John Webster, practitioner in physic, who, in 1677, when the doctrine of witchcraft was very generally believed, and most zealously contended for, published 'The Displaying of supposed Witchcraft,' in a folio volume, full of curious learning; in which he combats the erroneous opinions which then prevailed, and had been advocated by such men as Glanvil and Casaubon. Baxter published his work long after this of Webster appeared; it is rather surprising that he either knew it not, or if he was acquainted with it, that he took no notice of it.

"Descending spirits have convers'd with men,
And told the secrets of the world unknown,"

such things may happen again. The Romish doctrine of purgatory, with the legends of the saints, have been fruitful sources of superstition, and have supplied a large portion of the material which has been wrought into the innumerable fictions that still continue afloat, and even yet too frequently constitute the terror of the nursery and the cottage. The appearance and advance of light, however, invariably operate on these superstitious fancies, like the fabled influence of the cock crowing or appearance of the morning, on the spirits of the deep. They cannot stir, or walk abroad, under the light of heaven.

I cannot take leave of this portion of the writings of Baxter, without remarking, what I believe has not been attended to, that he is the first original writer on the evidences of revealed religion in the English language. Before Herbert's time the deistical controversy had not appeared in this country, and Baxter was the first to grapple with his lordship's argument. In 1604, a translation of a work by an illustrious French Protestant, appeared with the following title, 'A work concerning the trueness of Christian Religion, written in French against Atheists, Epicures, Paynims, Jews, Mahometists, and other infidels, by Philip Mornay, Lord of Plessie Marlie. Begun to be translated by Sir Philip Sydney, and at his request finished by Arthur Golding, 4to.' This is a work of very considerable merit. Of the treatise of Grotius 'De Veritate,' which had also been translated before, it is superfluous to speak; its merits are well known, and duly estimated.

Had the 'Atheomastix' of Bishop Fotherby, published in 1622, been completed, it would have enjoyed the precedence in this department which now properly belongs to Baxter. That learned writer proposed to treat of four subjects:—"That there is a God—That there is but one God—That Jehovah, our God, is that one God—And, that the Holy Scriptures are the word of God." His publication, however, embraces only the first two topics. These are discussed with considerable ability, and with a vast profusion of learning, which excite regret that the bishop was not spared to grapple with infidelity, after so ably demolishing Atheism.

Stillingfleet's 'Origines Sacræ,' first appeared in 1663, where the subject is treated with great learning and ability, and very elaborately. This distinguished performance is entitled to great praise. It contains a large portion of recondite learning; prosecutes the subject with great strength of argument; and exhibits "the grounds of the Christian faith, as to the truth and divine authority of the Scriptures," in a manner that can

scarcely fail to produce conviction in the minds of honest inquirers. The works of Baxter on the evidences of religion, are neither so learned nor so systematically arranged, but they are more adapted to popular and general usefulness than is the production of Stillingfleet. They are written with more point, and contain a greater mixture of those views of Christianity which are necessary to be received as the great object of its testimony, and without which the discussion of its evidence is little calculated to profit. Neither Baxter nor Stillingfleet appears to have borrowed from the other; and each is excellent in his own way.

Since that time, a multitude of works on every branch of the Christian evidence has been published. The diversified forms in which revelation has been attacked, have only occasioned a corresponding diversity of defence. If infidelity has racked its ingenuity to undermine or overthrow the citadel of God, talent not less powerful, and genius equally splendid, have been employed in successfully resisting the attempt. In argument, infidels have long since been driven from the field. They have been stripped of their armor; their sophistry and guile have been exposed; their malice detected, and their wit turned against themselves. If on the one side can be ranked a Hume and a Gibbon, a Voltaire and a Paine; on the other can be placed, Campbell, and Hales, Lardner, Watson, Paley, and Gregory, with a numerous host beside; in learning and talents equal to any of the adversaries of the faith, and in moral worth and weight of character not to be mentioned in connexion with such men. If their invaluable writings have in some measure superseded those of Baxter, it is not because they contain stronger arguments, or more ingenious reasonings, but because they are better adapted to the peculiar forms which infidelity has more recently assumed. While grateful for their labors, it is proper we should remember, that their predecessors did worthily in their time. They in fact cleared the ground, and laid the foundation of that noble structure which more modern architects have succeeded in rearing. [t]

(t) The latest work in this department of literature, which I have seen, is 'The Divine Origin of Christianity, deduced from some of those Evidences which are not founded on the Authority of Scripture.' By John Sheppard. 2 vols. 12mo. 1829. The author of this work is well known to the public by his beautiful little work on private devotion: the present, is of an entirely different character; but does no less credit to his talents, his learning, and his acuteness. He is quite a Baxter for his scrupulosity in weighing and balancing proofs; and much more judicious in his manner of urging them. The work is in some danger of repelling superficial readers; both the arrangement and the learning of it require more study than they who wish to arrive at the knowledge of all science and art by the shortest road, are generally disposed to give to any subject. But the lover of close argument, and satisfactory information, will be amply repaid by the studious examination of these volumes.

CHAPTER II.

DOCTRINAL WORKS.

Introductory Observations—'Aphorisms of Justification'—Animadversions on the Aphorisms by Burgess, Warren, Wallis, Cartwright, and Lawson—Other Antagonists—'Apology'—Molinæus, Crandon, Eyres—'Confession of Faith'—'Perseverance'—Kendal—Barlow—Shepherd—'Saving Faith'—'Dissertations on Justification'—'On Justifying Righteousness'—Controversy with Tully—'Original Sin'—'Universal Redemption'—'Catholic Theology'—'Methodus Theologiæ'—'End of Doctrinal Controversies'—General View of Baxter's Doctrinal Sentiments—Strictures on his Manner of conducting Controversy—Conclusion.

The doctrinal works of Baxter, which naturally follow his writings on the evidences of religion, with the controversies in which they involved him, occupied a large portion of his active and useful life. It will be expected, therefore, that a full account of this class of his writings, and of his peculiar theological sentiments, should be given in this chapter. Though I have not shrunk from labor, in endeavoring to accomplish the task which I have voluntarily undertaken, I frankly confess that this part of it has been more difficult than any other; and I fear it may not afford the reader all the satisfaction he anticipates or desires. The immense extent of Baxter's writing on disputable subjects; the peculiar character of his mind—subtle, acute, and versatile, in an extraordinary degree; the manner in which he was assailed by the men of all parties and of all creeds, which led to a great diversity of defence and attack on his part; his favorite scheme of union and reconciliation—involving a variety of concessions, and tempting him to avail himself of many refined and untangible distinctions, are some of the causes and sources of those difficulties which belong to the attempt to ascertain his precise sentiments, and correctly to represent the design of his voluminous productions.

Whatever view may be taken of his opinions on various subordinate subjects, it is certain that on all matters of essential and vital importance in the evangelical system, he held those truths which are most surely believed among all genuine Christians. He had, indeed, his own mode of explaining certain points, which a man who thought so much and so independently must have had. He was not formed to be an implicit believer in human creeds, or to follow in the steps of any uninspired

master. On the other hand, he had no ambition to be the founder of a new school of theology; for, though his name has been prefixed to a class, that class has never constituted a separate party, but, in as far as it has existed, has been found among persons of various parties: few even of whom would probably have been acknowledged by Baxter himself as altogether of his mind, and still fewer of them, perhaps, would have acknowledged him as their apostle.

The time has been when it would have been dangerous to the reputed orthodoxy of an individual who should have professed great respect for the doctrinal views of Baxter. High Arminians on the one hand, and high Calvinists on the other, agreed to revile him. Baxterianism was a term of reproach, readily applied to many, who were sounder in the faith than some of those who arrogated to themselves the exclusive appellation of orthodox. That time, however, has passed away. The character of Baxter has outlived all the reproaches fulminated against it; and we may now, without fear of dishonor, state his opinions, analyze, his doctrines, and defend or advocate his cause where we believe it to be just. It is my business to give a faithful statement of matter of fact, "neither to extenuate, nor set down aught in malice," respecting our author; with whom I sometimes agree, and sometimes differ, on the topics discussed in this chapter.

In 1649, Baxter began his career of authorship by a small publication, entitled "Aphorisms of Justification." This work deserves attention, not so much on its own account, for he acknowledges it was written "in his immature youth, and the crudity of his new conceptions,"[u] as because it contains the germs of his leading sentiments, and was the occasion of the greater part of the doctrinal controversies in which he engaged. The professed object of it is, to explain the nature of justification, the covenants, satisfaction, righteousness, faith, works, &c. This he attempts in a series of eighty theses, or propositions, with their respective explanations. That he did not succeed to his own satisfaction, he freely acknowledges; and that it was still less satisfactory to others, appears from the numerous animadversions and defences which it occasioned. He blames himself for deficiency and incautiousness, and for meddling imprudently with Dr. Owen. "It was overmuch valued,"

(u) The copy of the Aphorisms used by me is one of the second edition, which was pretended to be printed at the Hague, 1655, but in reality was printed surreptitiously by a Cambridge bookseller. This copy contains many marginal notes, and alterations of the text, in the hand-writing of Mr. Baxter. Of these the expression quoted above is part. Many of these notes and alterations discover the progress of the writer's mind, and the amiable candor by which it was distinguished. At the head of one thesis, he says, "There is nothing in this section worth reading."

he says, "by some, and overmuch blamed by others; both contrary to my own esteem of it. It cost me more than any other book that I have written; not only by men's offence, but especially by putting me on long and tedious writings. But it was a great help to my understanding, for the animadverters were of several minds, and what one approved another confuted, being further from each other than any of them were from me."

Among those who furnished him with strictures, some in manuscript, and some in print, were Mr. Anthony Burgess, to whom, and Richard Vines, it was dedicated. Mr. John Warren; Dr. John Wallis, one of the scribes to the Wesminister Assembly, and well known for his mathematical talents; Mr. Christopher Cartwright, of York, a Presbyterian minister of considerable learning; and Mr. George Lawson, of whom Baxter gives rather a long description. But I must give his own account of these individuals, as it contains some things worthy of being recorded.

"The first that I craved animadversions from was Mr. Burgess, and with much ado, extorted only two or three letters against justification by works, as he called it; which, with my answers, were afterwards published; when he had proceeded to print against me what he would not give me in writing.

"The next and full animadversions which I received, were from Mr. John Warren, an honest, acute, ingenious man, to whom I answered in freer expressions than others, because he was my junior and familiar friend; being a school-boy at Bridgnorth when I was preacher there, and his father was my neighbor. Next to his, I had animadversions from Dr. John Wallis, very judicious and moderate, to which I began to write a reply, but broke it off in the middle, because he little differed from me.

"The next I had, was from Mr. Christopher Cartwright, of York, who defended the king against the Marquis of Worcester. He was a man of good reading, as to our later divines, and was very well versed in the common road; a very good Hebrician, and a very honest, worthy person. His animadversions were most against my distinction of righteousness into legal and evangelical, according to the two covenants. His answer was full of citations out of Amesius, Whittaker, Davenant, &c. I wrote him a full reply; and he wrote me a rejoinder; to which, my time not allowing me to write a full confutation, I took up all the points of difference between him and me, and handled them briefly, confirming my reasons for the ease of the reader and myself.

"The next animadverter was Mr. George Lawson, the ablest man of them all, or of almost any I know in England; especially by the advantage of his age, and very hard studies,

and methodical head, but above all, by his great skill in politics, wherein he is most exact, which contributeth not a little to the understanding of divinity. He was himself near the Arminians, differing from them only in the point of perseverance as to the confirmed, and some little matters more; and though he went further than I did from the Antinomians, yet being conversant with men of another mind, to redeem himself from their offence, he set himself against some passages of mine, which others marvelled that he, of all men, should oppose; especially about the object of faith and justification. He afterwards published an excellent sum of divinity, called *Theopolitica;* in which he insisteth on these two points, to make good what he had said in his MS. against me.

"He hath written, also, animadversions on Hobbes, and a piece on ecclesiastical and civil policy, according to the method of politics; an excellent book, were it not that he seemeth to justify the king's death, and meddles too boldly with the political controversies of the times, though he was a Conformist. I have also seen some ingenious manuscripts of his for the taking of the engagement to be true to the Commonwealth, as established without a king and house of lords, his opinions being much for submitting to the present possessor, though a usurper; but I thought those papers easily answerable. His animadversions on my papers were large, in which he frequently took occasion to be copious and distinct, in laying down his own judgment, which pleased me very well. I returned him a full answer, and received from him a large reply; instead of a rejoinder to which, I summed up our differences, and spoke to them briefly and distinctly, and not *verbatim* to the words of his book. I must thankfully acknowledge that I learned more from Mr. Lawson than from any divine that gave me animadversions, or that ever I conversed with. For, two or three passages in my first reply to him, he convinced me, were mistakes; and I found up and down in him those hints of truths which had a great deal of light in them, and were very apt for good improvement, especially his instigating me to the study of politics, in which he much lamented the ignorance of divines, did prove a singular benefit to me. I confess it owing to my own uncapableness that I have received no more good from others. But yet I must be so grateful as to confess that my understanding hath made a better improvement of Grotius 'De Satisfactione Christi,' and of Mr. Lawson's manuscripts, than of any thing else that ever I read. They convinced me how unfit we are to write about Christ's government, laws and judgment, while we understand not the true nature of government and laws in general; and that he that is ignorant of politics, and of the law of nature, will

be ignorant and erroneous in divinity and the sacred Scriptures." [x]

Thus did Baxter, at a very early period of his life, launch into the ocean of controversy, on some of the most interesting subjects that can engage the human mind. The manner in which he began to treat them was little favorable to arriving at correct and satisfactory conclusions; but the persons whom he engaged to discuss them with him, were all men of respectable powers in theological argument, from whose letters or publications he derived considerable profit.

To give a concise and accurate opinion of these Aphorisms, is no easy task. This difficulty arises from the great number of separate propositions, which are neither always consistent with truth nor with one another. As a book, it abounds in moral and metaphysical distinctions, and yet its definitions are frequently both inaccurate and obscure. It contains a large portion of truth, mixed and interwoven with no small portion of error. When he thus expresses himself about our participation of Christ's righteousness, every true Christian is prepared to go along with him: "That God, the Father, doth accept the sufferings and mediation of his Son, as a full satisfaction to his violated law, and as a valuable consideration, upon which he will wholly forgive and acquit the offenders themselves, receive them again into favor, and give them the addition also of a more excellent happiness, so they will but receive his Son upon the terms expressed in the Gospel." But when he comes to explain "the terms of the Gospel," and the manner in which men submit to them, we meet with much that is incautious. To a good deal of the objectionable language of his theses, he indeed gives a harmless interpretation in the accompanying explanation, or in some subsequent proposition renders it entirely nugatory. But still there remains much which is calculated to mislead. He speaks about the Gospel being "a new law, the conditions of which are easier than those of the old;" of "faith as the righteousness of a Christian." He defines this faith as "the condition of the new covenant," and includes in it the whole of religion. He represents the death of Christ as not "affecting any sins against the Gospel;" speaks of "works" as "part of the condition on which Christ's righteousness becomes ours," and maintains that "we are justified by sincere obedience." To this language, no man who understands aright the gratuitous justification which is through faith in the blood of Christ, will ever subscribe.

These were some of the expressions or sentiments which involved Baxter in most of the doctrinal altercations that oc-

(x) Life, part i. pp. 107, 108.

cupied so large a portion of his future life, and on account of which his name has been placed at the head of a peculiar creed. While he explained, modified, and retracted, many things in this first, and perhaps most objectionable of his works, he adhered to the substance of its sentiments to the last.[y]

Along with those sentiments, which most persons of evangelical views agree to be incorrect, he has introduced some others on which various opinions have been entertained. He denies the distinction, or rather the use that has been made of it, between the active and passive righteousness of Christ; the latter as the Christian's title to forgiveness, and the former to life. He contends, if I understand him aright, that the sufferings of the Redeemer include the whole of his earthly undertaking, terminated by his death, and that these furnish at once the ground of acceptance, and the channel of heavenly and eternal life. On the nature and extent of the death, threatened on account of the Adamic transgression, also, he held views not generally entertained: "That man should live here for a season a dying life, separated from God, devoid of his image, subject to bodily curses and calamities, dead in law, and at last his soul and body be separated; his body turning to dust from whence it came, and his soul enduring everlasting sorrow, yet nothing so great, as those that are threatened in the new covenant." These things, however, he mentions in the preface, that he does not very confidently insist on.[z]

(y) It is to be regretted that the incorrect language of Baxter, on some of the above topics, is by no means peculiar to him. Even Dr. Doddridge, whose evangelical sentiments are so well known, is very injudicious sometimes in his definitions. Thus, in his lectures, where we should suppose great accuracy would be studied, he says, "Christ has made *satisfaction* for the sins of all those who repent of their sins, and return to God in the way *of sincere though imperfect obedience.*" p. 418. "Faith in Christ is a very extensive principle, and includes, *in its nature,* and inseparable effects, *the whole of moral virtue.*" p. 424. 2d Edit. This mode of speaking of the way of acceptance, is as objectionable as any thing I have met with in Baxter. In other places, however, both Baxter and Doddridge show that they were more consistent with the truth, though not consistent with themselves.

(z) The extent of the Adamic curse has occasioned a good deal of discussion. The majority, I believe, of Calvinistic writers contend that it includes death, temporal, spiritual, and eternal.—Vide *Calvini Inst.* lib. ii. c. 3. *Westminster Conf.* chap. vi. Dr. Doddridge objects to this view of it, without intimating what his own was.—*Lectures,* pp. 415, 416. 2d Edit. Bishop Law maintained that it meant an entire destruction, rather than a perpetual punishment—an annihilation of the soul, and a resolution of the body into its original dust. *Theory of Relig.* pp. 339—351. 7th Edit. I suppose Bishop Bull was of the same opinion with Law.—See *Life, by Nelson,* pp. 89, 197, 198, 225. Joseph Hallet also seems to have been nearly of this opinion.—*Notes and Observations,* vol. i. pp. 313—326. Mr. Archibald M'Lean, of Edinburgh, in his tract on original sin, endeavors to establish that the curse extended no further than to natural death, or the dissolution of soul and body. That a resurrection was not provided by the Adamic constitution, and belongs entirely to the redemption of Christ, seems to be plainly intimated in the New Testament.—1 Cor. xv. 21—23; Rom. v. 12—21. Dr. Watts had some views of this subject peculiar to himself.—See his *Ruin and Recovery,* pp. 324—347. Dr. Ridgley also had an hypothesis of his own.—See *Body of Divinity,* p. 11.

In the appendix to this small work, he makes an acknowledgment which explains the reason of the perplexities that occur in this and some other of his controversial writings. "To tell the truth, while I busily read what other men said in these controversies, my mind was so prepossessed with their notions, that I could not possibly see the truth in its own native and naked evidence; and when I entered into public disputations concerning it, though I was truly willing to know the truth, my mind was so forestalled with borrowed notions, that I chiefly studied how to make good the opinions which I had received, and ran farther from the truth. Yea, when I read the truth in Dr. Preston's and other men's writings, I did not consider and understand it; and when I heard it from them whom I opposed in wrangling disputations, or read it in books of controversy, I discerned it least of all. Till at last, being in my sickness cast far from home, *where I had no book but my Bible, I set to study the truth from thence, and so, by the blessing of God, discovered more in one week, than I had done before in seventeen years' reading, hearing, and wrangling.*" This is a most important testimony. It shows us that we must look for Baxter's doctrinal views to his practical rather than to his controversial writings. It is much easier to applaud the fine sentiment of Chillingworth, that "the Bible,—the Bible alone is the religion of Protestants," than it is fully to adopt it, and to bring all our sentiments and thoughts under subjection to it. Yet it is infinitely pleasanter and more satisfactory to appeal at once to "the law and the testimony," than to be bandied from author to author, or doomed to explore and reconcile the endless contradictions and jarrings of human authority. [a]

At the end of his work on Infant Baptism, published in 1650, the year after his Aphorisms, Baxter requested the animadversions of his brethren on them, and was soon furnished with their remarks to the full extent of his desires. Beside those already referred to as noticing this book, Mr. Blake, of Tamworth, made some exceptions to it in a work on the Covenants, which was published soon after. Kendall, in his defence of the doctrine of perseverance against John Goodwin, added an appendix of animadversions on Baxter. William Eyre, of Salisbury, attacked him in a book on Justification, ushered into the world with a preface by Dr. Owen. But the most extended work in reply to him was by John Crandon, minister at Fawley, in Hampshire, under the affected title of "Baxter's

(a) For an account of the part which Owen took in this controversy, see 'Memoirs of Owen,' pp. 119—122. Beside the persons mentioned in the text, who wrote against the Aphorisms, and of whom Mr. Baxter himself takes notice, John Tombes, the Baptist, wrote 'Animadversiones Quædam in Aphorismos, Richardi Baxter, de Justificatione,' 1658.

Aphorisms exorized and authorized," a huge quarto of 700 pages, with a prefatory letter by Caryl.

Baxter, nothing daunted by the appearance and front of so many adversaries, produced, in 1654, what he calls his 'Apology,' containing his 'reasons of dissent from Mr. Blake's exceptions;' 'The Reduction of a Digressor,' in reply to Kendall; an 'Admonition to Mr. William Eyre;' and 'Crandon Anatomized; or, a Nosegay of the choicest Flowers in that Garden presented to Joseph Caryl.' Not satisfied with repelling his antagonists in this volume, he goes out of the way to produce a 'Confutation of a Dissertation for the Justification of Infidels,' by Ludiomæus Colvinus, alias Ludovicus Molinæus, professor of history, in Oxford.

The following notices of several of these opponents are furnished by Baxter, and will perhaps amuse the reader.

"As for Ludiomæus Colvinus, it is Ludovicus Molinæus, a doctor of physic, son to Peter Molinæus, and public professor of history in Oxford. He wrote a small Latin treatise against his own brother, Cyrus Molinæus, to prove that justification is before faith. I thought I might be bold to confute him, who chose the truth and his own brother to oppose. Another small assault the same author made against me (instead of a reply,) for approving of Cameron's and Amiraldus's way about universal redemption and grace, to which I answered in the preface to the book; but these things were so far from alienating the esteem and affection of the doctor, that he is now at this day, one of those friends who are injurious to the honor of their own understandings, by overvaluing me; and would fain have spent his time in translating some of my books into the French tongue.

"Mr. Crandon was a man that had run from Arminianism, into the extreme of half-antinomianism; and having an excessive zeal for his opinions (which seem to be honored by the extolling of free grace), and withal being an utter stranger to me, he got a deep conceit that I was a Papist, and in that persuasion, wrote a large book against my Aphorisms, which moved laughter in many, and pity in others, and troubled his friends, as having disadvantaged their cause. As soon as the book came abroad, the news of the author's death came with it, who died a fortnight after its birth. I had beforehand got all, save the beginning and end out of the press, and wrote so much for an answer as I thought it worthy, before the publication of it.

"Mr. Eyre was a preacher in Sailsbury, of Mr. Crandon's opinion, who having preached there for justification before faith, that is, the justification of elect infidels, was publicly confuted by Mr. Warren, and Mr. Woodbridge, a very judicious minister

of Newbury, who had lived in New England. Mr. Woodbridge printed his sermon, which very perspicuously opened the doctrine of justification, after the method that I had done. Mr. Eyre, being offended with me as a partner, gave me some part of his opposition, to whom I returned an answer in the end; and a few words to Mr. Caryl, who licensed and approved Mr. Crandon's book, for the Antinominians were commonly Independents. No one of all the parties replied to this book, save only Mr. Blake, to some part of that which touched him." [b]

The Apology containing so many parts, is a thick quarto, full of that subtle and acute reasoning for which its author was eminently distinguished. The main point in the controversy, the subject of justification, is often lost sight of in the strife of words, and the multifarious discussions perpetually occurring. He generally treats his adversaries respectfully, with the exception of Crandon, who had assailed him with intolerable insolence and abuse. He prefixed to the volume, an admirable dedication to his old friend and companion in the army, "the Honorable Commissary-General Whalley." As it is not my intention to dwell in detail on the contents of this volume, I shall extract a passage from the dedication, where the author defends his engaging in controversy by an ingenious reference to the wars in which Whalley and himself had reluctantly engaged, and concludes with a beautiful address to the veteran soldier.

"The work of these papers has been, to my mind, somewhat like those sad employments wherein I attended you: of themselves, grievous and ungrateful; exasperating others, and not pleasing ourselves. The remembrance of those years is so little delightful to me, that I look back upon them as the saddest part of my life; so the review of this apology is but the renewing of my trouble; to think of our common frailty and darkness, and what revered and much-valued brethren I contradict; but especially, the fear lest men should make this collision an occasion of derision, and, by receiving the sparks into combustible affections, should turn that to a conflagration, which I intended but for an illumination. If you say, I should then have let it alone, the same answer must serve as, in the former case, we were wont to use. Some say, that I, who pretend so much for peace, should not write of controversies. For myself, it is not much matter: but must God's truth stand as a butt for every man to shoot at? Must there be such liberty of opposing it, and none of defending? One party cannot have peace without the other's consent. To be buffeted and assaulted, and commanded to deliver up the truth of God, and called unpeaceable, if I defend

(b) Life, part i. pp. 110, 111.

it and resist, this is such equity as we were wont to find. In a word, both works were ungrateful to me, and are so in the review; but in both, as Providence and men's onset imposed a necessity, and drove me to that strait, that I must defend or do worse, so did the same Providence clear my way, and draw me on, and sweeten unusual troubles with unusual mercies, and issue all in testimonies of grace, that as I had great mixtures of comfort with sorrow in the performance, so have I in the review; and as I had more eminent deliverances, and other mercies, in those years and ways of blood and dolor, than in most of my life besides, so have I had more encouraging light since I was engaged in those controversies. For I speak not of these few papers only, but of many more of the like nature that have taken up my time; and as I still retained a hope that the end of all our calamities, and strange disposings of Providence, would be somewhat better than was threatened of late, so experience hath taught me to think that the issue of my most ungrateful labors shall not be in vain; but that Providence which extracted them, hath some use to make of them better than I am yet aware of; if not in this age, yet in times to come. The best is, we now draw no blood: and honest hearts will not feel themselves wounded with that blow which is only given to their errors. However, God must be served when he calls for it, though by the harshest and most unpleasing work. Only, the Lord teach us to watch carefully over our deceitful hearts, lest we should serve ourselves while we think and say we are serving him; and lest we should militate for our own honor and interest, when we pretend to do it for his truth and glory!

"I hope, sir, the diversity of opinions in these days will not diminish your estimation of Christianity, nor make you suspect that all is doubtful, because so much is doubted of. Though the tempter seems to be playing such a game in the world, God will go beyond him, and turn that to illustration and confirmation which he intended for confusion and extirpation of the truth. You know it is no news to hear of men, ignorant, proud, and licentious, of what religion soever they be: this trinity is the creator of heresies. As for the sober and godly, it is but in lesser things that they disagree; and mostly about words and methods, more than matter, though the smallest things of God are not contemptible. He that wonders to see wise men differ, doth but wonder that they are yet imperfect, and know but in part; that is, that they are yet mortal sinners, and not glorified on earth! Such wonderers know not what man is, and are too great strangers to themselves. If they turn these differences to the prejudice of God's truth or dishonor of godliness, they show themselves yet more unreasonable than those who blame the sun, that men are purblind; and, indeed, were pride and passion

laid aside in our disputes, if men could gently suffer contradiction, and heartily love and correspond with those that in lower matters do gainsay them, I see not but such friendly debates might edify.

"For yourself, sir, as you were a friend to sound doctrine, to unity, and to piety, and to the preachers, defenders, and practisers, thereof, while I conversed with you, and, as fame informeth us, have continued such, so I hope that God, who hath so long preserved you, will preserve you to the end; and he that hath been your shield in corporal dangers will be so in spiritual.

"Your great warfare is not yet accomplished: the worms of corruption that breed in us will live, in some measure, till we die ourselves. Your conquest of yourself is yet imperfect. To fight with yourself, you will find the hardest but most necessary conflict that ever yet you were engaged in; and to overcome yourself, the most honorable and gainful victory. Think not that your greatest trials are all over. Prosperity hath its peculiar temptations, by which it hath foiled many that stood unshaken in the storms of adversity. The tempter, who hath had you on the waves, will now assault you in the calm, and hath his last game to play on the mountain, till nature cause you to descend. Stand this charge, and you win the day." [b]

Whalley, to whom these faithful admonitions were addressed, was one of the most active of the republican officers in the parliamentary army. He was one of the king's judges, and took a leading part in procuring the resignation of Richard Cromwell. He left England with his son-in-law, Gough, for America, a few days before the Restoration. Landing at Boston, they waited on Governor Endicott, and told him who they were. They then took up their residence in that neighborhood, till a hue and cry followed them from Barbadoes. Then they removed to Newhaven, where they owed their preservation to John Davenport, the minister of the place; who had the courage to preach to the people, when their pursuers arrived, from Isaiah xvi. 3, 4. Though large rewards were offered for them, and Davenport threatened, as it was known he had harbored them, they were still concealed. Their hiding place was a cave on the top of a rock, a few miles from the town. Here they lurked two or three years, when they moved to Hadley, where they were concealed by Russel, the minister, fifteen or sixteen years. During their residence in this place, a singular opportunity was afforded one of the fugitives to render momentous assistance to his preservers. During a long war between the English settlers and the Indian chief of Pokanoket, the Indians surprised Hadley in the time of public worship. The men of

(b) Dedication.

the town, though in the habit of taking arms with them when they attended divine service, were panic-struck and confounded; and, in all probability, not a soul of them would have been saved, had not an old and venerable man, whose dress was different from the inhabitants, and whom no one had seen before, suddenly appeared among them. He rallied them, put himself at their head, gave his orders like one accustomed to battle, led them on, routed the enemy, and, when the victory was complete, was no longer to be found. This deliverer, whom the people believed to be an angel, was General Gough! Whalley died at Hadley in 1688, and Gough some time after. The history is not without interest; and the reader will not suppose it is made to do honor to the regicides, when he is informed that the statement is taken from the Quarterly Review. [c] Considering the opinion entertained of Whalley by Baxter, and the latter part of his history, there is reason to regard him as another of those men who, "in evil times," devoted themselves to the interests of their country, and whose principles and character (though every part of their conduct is not to be vindicated) have long been most infamously misrepresented.

To return to Baxter. Finding that his Apology had not answered the end for which it was made—the satisfaction of his opponents—in 1655 he published his 'Confession of Faith, especially concerning the interest of repentance, and sincere obedience to Christ, in our justification and salvation.' 4to. The object of the confession, he tells us in his own life, was "to save any more misunderstanding of his Aphorisms, and to declare his suspension of them till he should reprint them;" which he never did. "In my Confession," he says, "I opened the whole doctrine of Antinomianism, and brought the testimonies of abundance of our divines, who gave as much to other works, beside faith, in justification, as I did."

This remark places before us one peculiarity in Baxter's system. He regarded faith not merely as the *sine qua non* of a sinner's justification, but as what was imputed for righteousness; and included in this faith what he considered sincere obedience to Christ as a Lord or Lawgiver. Yet he had his own way of explaining this phraseology consistently with his strong and repeated declaration that "faith itself doth not merit our pardon or justification, nor justify us as a work, nor as faith;" that "no works of the regenerate, internal or external, are to join with Christ's sufferings and merits, as any part of satisfaction to God's justice for our sins; no, not the least part of the least sin;" and that "neither faith, love, repentance,

(c) 'Quarterly Review' for November, 1809. vol. ii. p. 32. The story is told by Holmes in his 'Annals of America.'

nor any works of ours, are true, efficient causes of our remission or justification, either principal or instrumental." He declares in the most solemn manner, "I do heartily approve of the shorter catechism of the assembly, and of all therein contained; and I take it for the best catechism I ever yet saw." "I have perused," he says, "all the articles of the Synod of Dort, and unfeignedly honor them, as containing sound and moderate doctrine; and there is nothing that I have observed in it all, that my judgment doth contradict, if I be allowed these few expositions." These expositions do not affect any of the leading points. He says: "In the very article of perseverance, which some are pleased to quarrel with me about, I subscribe to the Synod;" "yea," he adds, "in the article of the extent of redemption, wherein I am most suspected and accused, I do subscribe to the Synod of Dort, *without any exception, limitation, or exposition, of any word, as doubtful and obscure.*"

As every man ought to be allowed to be the expositor of his own sentiments, let no man, after this, question or deny the Calvinism of Richard Baxter. He was as much a Calvinist as thousands who then, or who now, bear the name without suspicion. He indeed used language liable to be misunderstood, as do all who are disposed to be too refined or metaphysical on moral subjects. His very efforts at precision in the use of words and phrases, involved him in controversy, which, by a more general mode of speaking, he would have avoided. He was open and honest; what other men swallowed in a mass, he divided, analyzed, and explained, often to a troublesome extent. Yet his very scrupulosity in holding and explaining his sentiments, compels us to respect him: while his supreme regard for the honor of God, the holiness of his government, and the claims of his law, entitles him to our highest approbation. The man who could write the following passage, cannot be regarded as holding either narrow or obscure views of the divine moral government; or of the system of redemption which that moral government embraces and developes.

"As is the moon with the stars unto the expanded firmament; as are the well-ordered cities with their ornaments and fortifications to the woods and wilderness, such is the church to the rest of the world. The felicity of the church is in the love of God, and its blessed influence, whose face is that sun which doth enlighten and enliven it. If earth and sin had not caused a separation and eclipse, the world and the church would have been the same, and this church would have enjoyed an uninterrupted day-light. It is the earth that moveth and turneth from this sun, and not the sun's receding from the earth, that brings our night. It is not God, but man, that lost his goodness; nor is it necessary to our separation, that a change be made on him,

but on us. Christ came not into the world to make God better, but to make us better; nor did he die to make him more disposed to do good, but to dispose us to receive it. His purpose was not actually to change the mind of God, nor to incline him to have mercy who before was disinclined, but to make the pardon of man's sin a thing convenient for the righteous and holy Governor of the world to bestow, without any impeachment of the honor of his wisdom, holiness, or justice; yea, to the more eminent glorifying of them all.

"Two things are requisite to make man amiable in the eyes of God, and a fit object for the Most Holy to take pleasure in: one is, his suitableness to the holiness of God's nature; the other respecteth his governing justice. We must, in this life, see God in the glass of the creature, and especially in man that beareth his image. Were we holy, he would love us as a holy God: and were we innocent, he would encourage us a righteous and bounteous Governor. But as there is no particular governing justice, without that universal natural justice which it pre-supposeth and floweth from, so can there be no such thing as innocency in us as subjects, which floweth not from a holiness of our natures as men. We must be good, before we can live as the good. In both these respects, man was amiable in the eyes of his Maker, till sin depraved him, and deprived him of both. To both these must the Saviour again restore him: and this is the work that he came into the world to do, even to seek and to save that which was doubly lost, and to destroy that twofold work of the devil, who hath drawn us to be both unholy and guilty.

"As in the fall, the natural real evil was antecedent to the relative guilt; so is it in the good conferred in the reparation. We must, in order of nature, be first turned by repentance unto God, through faith in the Redeemer, and then receive the remission of our sins. As it was man himself that was the subject of that twofold unrighteousness, so it is man himself that must be restored to that twofold righteousness which he lost, that is, sanctity, and not-guiltiness. Christ came not to possess God with any false opinion of us, nor is he such a physician as to perform but a supposed or reputative cure: he came not to persuade his Father to judge us to be well, because He is well; or to leave us uncured, and to persuade God that we are cured. It is we that were guilty and unholy; it is we that must be justified or condemned, and therefore it is we that must be restored unto righteousness. If Christ only were righteous, Christ only would be reputed and judged righteous, and Christ only would be happy. The Judge of the world will not justify the unrighteous, merely because another is righteous, nor can the holy God take complacency in an unholy sinner, because another is holy. Never did the blessed Son of God intend, in his

dying or merits, to change the holy nature of his Father, and to cause him to love that which is not lovely, or to reconcile him to that which he abhorreth, as he is God. We must bear his own image, and be holy as he is holy, before he can approve us, or love us in complacency. This is the work of our blessed Redeemer, to make man fit for God's approbation and delight. Though we are the subjects, he is the cause. He regenerateth us, that he may pardon us; and he pardoneth us, that he may further sanctify us, and make us fit for our Master's use. He will not remove our guilt till we return, nor will he accept our actual services till our guilt be removed. By supernatural operations must both be accomplished: a regress from such a privation as was our holiness, requireth a supernatural work upon us; and a deliverance from such guilt and deserved punishment, requireth a supernatural operation for us. The one Christ effecteth in us by his sanctifying Spirit, through the instrumentality of his word, as informing and exciting; the other he effecteth by his own (and his Father's) will, through the instrumentallty of his Gospel grant, by way of donation, making an universal conditional deed of gift of himself, and remission and right to glory, to all that return by repentance and faith. His blood is the meritorious cause of both, but not of both on the same account; for directly it was guilt only that made his blood necessary for our recovery. Had there been nothing to do but renew us by repentance and sanctification, this might have been done without any bloodshed, by the work of the word and Spirit. God at first gave man his image freely, and did not sell it for a price of blood; nor doth he so delight in blood, as to desire it, or accept it for itself, but for the ends which it must, as a convenient means, attain. Those ends are the demonstration proximately of his governing justice, in the vindication of the honor of his law and rule, and for the wrong of others: ultimately and principally, it is the demonstration of his natural sin-hating holiness, and his unspeakable love to the sons of men, but especially to his elect. In this sense was Christ a sacrifice and ransom, and may be truly said to have satisfied for our sins. He was not a sinner, nor so esteemed, nor could possibly take upon himself the numerical guilt, which lay on us, nor yet a guilt of the same sort, as having not the same sort of foundation or efficient; ours arising from the merit of our sin and the commination of the law; his being rather occasioned than merited by our sin, and occasioned by the law's threatening of us. He had neither sin of his own, nor merit of wrath from such sin, nor did the law oblige him to suffer for our sin; but he obliged himself to suffer for our sins, though not as in

our persons strictly, yet in our stead in the person of a Mediator."[d]

This extract is not less worthy of attention for the beauty and felicity of some of its language, than for the accuracy of the thoughts and sentiments it contains. Being divested of every thing controversial, it presents before us, in a plain, inartificial manner, the writer's views of the damage man sustained at the fall, and of the nature of the salvation provided in the Gospel. As conveying the real opinions of Baxter, it is worth ten thousand pages of his controversial writing; it demolishes the whole system of Antinomianism.

Some passages, on the subject of perseverance, in his treatise on 'The Right Method of Peace of Conscience,' having been misunderstood, he left them out of a second impression of that book; but, to prevent any misunderstanding that might arise from this, he published a quarto pamphlet, in 1657, entitled 'Richard Baxter's Account of his Present Thoughts concerning the Controversies about the Perseverance of the Saints.' It contains, chiefly, a statement of the great variety of opinions which prevail, according to Baxter, about the last of the five points. He enumerates twelve several modes of holding this doctrine, and gives his own views in the shape of objection to, or approbation of, each of these modes. This method of stating his sentiments is sufficiently tiresome and unsatisfactory. He professes not to have attained to certainty in understanding this point, with all the Scriptures that concern it, better than Augustine, and the common judgment of the church for so many ages; and, therefore, he dares not say that he has attained to certainty that all the justified shall persevere. On the other hand, he is not disposed to maintain the opposite opinion; but he endeavors to show that the certainty of the final perseverance of all who have been justified is not so necessary to comfort, much less to salvation, as many suppose. What his own opinions, stripped of all controversial and metaphysical distinctions, were, seem plainly expressed in the following passage: "Therefore, notwithstanding all the objections that are against it, and the ill use that will be made of it by many, and the accidental troubles into which it may cast some believers, it seems to me that the doctrine of perseverance is grounded on the Scriptures, and therefore is to be maintained, not only as extending to all the elect, against the Lutherans and Arminians, but also as extending to all the truly sanctified, against Augustine, and the Jansenians, and other Dominicans; though we must rank it but among truths of its own order, and not lay the church's peace or communion upon it."

(d) 'Confession of Faith,' Preface.

This statement will, I apprehend, satisfy the most fastidious reader of the substantial orthodoxy of Baxter on this point. Had he said less about the opinions of others, in his controversial writings, and given us his own in fewer words than he commonly employs, I apprehend he would have been found a more consistent and thorough Calvinist than has generally been supposed. The grand controversy on the subject of perseverance, about the period when Baxter wrote his pamphlet, was carried on between Dr. Owen and John Goodwin. Kendal replied to Goodwin in defence of Owen, and by the way offered some remarks on Baxter's sentiments respecting justification and perseverance.

"Dr. Kendal," says Baxter, "was a little quick-spirited man, of great ostentation, and a considerable orator and scholar. He was driven on further by others than his own inclination would have led him. He thought to get an advantage for his reputation, by a triumph over John Goodwin and me: for those who set him to work, would needs have him conjoin us both together, to intimate that I was an Arminian. While I was replying to his first assault, he wrote a second; and when I had begun a reply to that, meeting me at London, he was so earnest to take up the controversy, engaging Mr. Vines to persuade me that Bishop Usher might determine it, and I was so willing to be eased of such work, that I quickly yielded to Usher's arbitration. He owned my judgment about universal redemption, perseverance, &c.; but directed us to write against each other no more. And so my second reply was suppressed."[e]

Baxter's 'Confession of Faith' proving little more satisfactory than his 'Apology,' and various animadversions having been made on it, he published, in 1658, his 'Four Disputations of Justification,' 4to. p. 423, with a view to meet some of the exceptions of his "learned and reverend brethren." The chief of those whom he notices, was Mr. Blake,[f] who died some time before Baxter's work appeared; Mr. Anthony Burgess,[g] whom he had drawn by correspondence into a discussion with him on the nature of faith and of imputed righteousness; Mr. John Warner,[h] against whose "confident but dark assaults" he de-

(e) Life, part i. p. 110.

(f) The work of Blake, to which Baxter refers, is a 'Postscript,' addressed to Baxter, at the end of his book, 'The Covenant Sealed,' which was published in 1655. It is written in a very kind and gentlemanly manner; though it exposes, somewhat strongly, several of Baxter's mistakes and unprofitable distinctions.

(g) The work of Burgess, on which Baxter animadverts, is 'The True Doctrine of Justification asserted,' 4to. 1654. The author was a man of considerable talents and learning. He was a member of the Westminster Assembly, and the author of several considerable works. He was ejected from Sutton Coldfield, in Warwickshire.

(h) Warner's book, to which Baxter replies, is the following, 'Diatriba Fidei Justificantis, &c.' or a Discourse of the object and office of faith as justifying, distinct from other objects and acts and offices of the same faith as sanctifying.

fends himself; and Mr. John Tombes, with whom he fought the famous battle of Bewdley.[i] All these writers receive that measure of attention which he deemed due to their respective merits; and though he treats some of them rather sharply, he spoke of them all with great kindness and respect. The discussion is carried on in a very elaborate and scholastic style. The differences between himself and his brethren often turn on mere verbal quibbles; though in a few instances the distinctions for which Baxter contended, are of some importance to a clear statement of the important doctrine under consideration.

In consequence of some remarks on the subject of faith, in his 'Saint's Rest,' at the end of Serjeant Shepherd's work on 'Sincerity and Hypocrisy,' Baxter is animadverted on, and his views of that subject controverted. This led him to publish, in 1658, a 'Treatise on Saving Faith,' in which his object is to show that he had been misunderstood, and that he had always maintained that "saving faith is not only gradually, but specifically distinct from all common faith." Some sentiments in the work to which he replies, are of a very dangerous nature, and precisely similar to opinions which have been promulgated with great confidence in our own times: such as, that saving faith "is built not on the revealed testimony of God, but upon his immediate revelation and testimony:" by which it is resolved into impulse and feeling, or mere inward persuasion, instead of resting on the broad ground of God's own declaration in his word. Also that "regenerate men believe that Christ hath already satisfied for their sins, so as the debt is paid, and they freed; that he hath reconciled the Father to them; that their sins are pardoned, or they justified; that they are the sons of God here, and shall be the sons of God hereafter." Baxter combats these mistaken views with great success, although some of his own positions are not defensible. It is truly marvellous that the subject of faith, which the Scriptures treat with so much simplicity, should have led to such interminable and distracting debates. If saving faith be something else than the belief of what God has revealed respecting the character and work of his Son, then is the whole affair of salvation an inexplicable riddle, which every man may interpret as best suits his fancy or his disposition.

8vo. 1657. It is a scholastic and metaphysical work of some ability. The views of the author on the subject of which he treats are both sound and well stated. They are much more satisfactory than what Baxter would have substituted in their place, and contain nothing of confidence or dark assaults, that I can see. The author was bred at Oxford, but became pastor of the church of Christ at Christ's-church, Hampshire, where he was when this treatise was written.

(i) The book of Tombes, to which Baxter replies, is the Latin animadversions on his Aphorisms, referred to in the note to a former page. Anthony Wood says, "They were published by the said Baxter, without the author's knowledge, in 1658."—*Athen. Oxon.* vol. iv. p. 1066.

Serjeant Shepherd was not the author of the observations which called forth the reply of Baxter. His "learned, consenting adversary," as he calls him, was Dr. Thomas Barlow, then provost of Queen's College, Oxford, and afterwards bishop of Lincoln. He was an able man—a decided Calvinist in his sentiments—evidently leaning rather to the ultra than to the moderate side of the doctrine.

Shepherd, to whose work his anonymous remarks were appended, was made serjeant-at-law and one of the Welsh judges, by Cromwell. He was a considerable man as a lawyer, but, as was no uncommon case at the period, he distinguished himself also as a divine. He wrote on law and theology. The discussion on both sides was maintained very courteously. Baxter contends there was no real difference between them; and subscribes the prefatory letter addressed to him, "A great esteemer of your piety and many labors."

Though published many years after this, yet as a part of the volume was written about this period of Baxter's life, and relates to the discussions in which his Aphorisms engaged him, it may here be most convenient to notice his 'Treatise of Justifying Righteousness,' in two books. It appeared in 8vo in 1676, and was occasioned by Dr. Tully's attack on him in his '*Justificatio Paulina*.' Beside his answer to Tully, it contains Cartwright's Exceptions to his Apology, which had been sent him at the time, but lost by Baxter. Having recovered the Exceptions, he published them at length, with his own answer in full. There is also, an answer to Dr. Tully's angry letter.

The first dissertation in this volume, on the imputation of Christ's righteousness, was written in 1672, but it was not printed till 1675. Baxter explains the sense in which he conceives the doctrine to be understood by sound Protestants, and vindicates his own views against some objections of Dr. Tully. He professes his own belief in the definition of the subject given in the several Protestant confessions, though he explains some of the phrases employed by them in his own way.

Christopher Cartwright, whose Exceptions are contained in this volume, was a highly respectable minister of York; and is still advantageously known as the author of some learned, rabbinical works. He animadverted on Baxter's Aphorisms, particularly on his distinction of legal and evangelical righteousness. Baxter replied to this in writing. Cartwright furnished the exceptions now published, which Baxter accompanies with a short answer.

The reference to Dr. Tully induces me to introduce at present, also, another small doctrinal performance—'Two Disputations of Original Sin,' p. 245, 12mo. It appeared in 1675 at "the request of Dr. Tully," but the first part of it had been

written long before. This was one of those subjects of discussion which the ministers about Kidderminister were accustomed to agitate at those presbyterial meetings in which Baxter always acted as moderator.

It appears that Baxter had been suspected by some of entertaining erroneous views on this important subject; by one class, being considered as believing too little, and by another, too much. To vindicate himself from all injurious imputations, therefore, he published these dissertations.

Dr. Thomas Tully, Baxter's opponent on several occasions, was a respectable clergyman of Calvinistic sentiments. In the time of the Commonwealth he had been principal of Edmund Hall, Oxford. He was, after the Restoration, made a royal chaplain, and beside other things, appointed to the deanery of Ripon, in Yorkshire. In his treatise above referred to, he defends Paul's doctrine of justification without works against some things in Bull's '*Harmonia Apostolica*' [k] and Baxter's Aphorisms. Baxter animadverted on Tully in several of his pieces. Tully answered the whole in a 'Letter to Mr. Richard Baxter,' occasioned by several injurious reflections of his upon a treatise, entitled, '*Justificatio Paulina*,' &c. This called forth Baxter's answer to Dr. Tully's angry letter.—Making the usual allowance for Baxter's refinements, I do not observe any sentiment on the subject of original sin materially different from what is usually held by Calvinistic writers. He was a firm believer in the original depravity of human nature; and that the only cure of that depravity is furnished by the redemption of Christ, and the Holy Spirit. [l]

I must, on the same principle, here also introduce Baxter's book on 'Universal Redemption,' though it was not published till after his death. The editor, Mr. Joseph Read, informs us, in the preface, that he transcribed it while living in Mr. Baxter's family at Kidderminster, in 1657; and that "the ministers of Worcestershire, who usually attended on his Thursday lecture, and heard these disputations at their monthly meeting, were generally desirous to have them printed." This work is an elaborate discussion of one of the main points on which Baxter is considered to have departed from

(k) An interesting account of the controversy between Bull and Tully on the subject of justification, will be found in Nelson's 'Life of Bull,' pp. 212—244. Tully had the best of the argument, without doubt, though Nelson ascribes the victory to Bull. Dr. Tully died in 1675.

(l) Among the Baxter MSS. in the Redcross-street library, is a long letter addressed to Baxter, and occasioned by this Treatise. It was printed in the 'Monthly Repository,' vol. xix. pp. 577, 726; and by the editors is ascribed to Gilbert Clerke, who was a Unitarian of some celebrity. He was the author of several Socinian tracts, and engaged in a controversy about the doctrine of the Nicene Creed with Bishop Bull. A short account of him is given in Bull's Life by Nelson, pp. 502—512.

the Calvinistic scheme. His mind had been directed to it at a very early period; for at the end of his Aphorisms, published in 1649, he gives notice of something which "he had written on *universal redemption*," and which he only kept back for a time in consequence of his "continual sickness," and in the expectation that it might be rendered unnecessary by some production of another pen.

The next of his doctrinal works which requires attention, is his 'CATHOLIC THEOLOGY—plain, pure, peaceable: for pacification of the dogmatical word-warriors; who, by contending about things unrevealed, or not understood, and by putting verbal differences for real, and their arbitrary notions for necessary sacred truths, deceived and deceiving by ambiguous, unexplained words, have long been the shame of the Christian religion, a scandal and hardening to unbelievers, the incendiaries, dividers, and distracters of the church; the occasion of state discords and wars; the corrupters of the Christian faith, and the subverters of their own souls, and those of their followers: calling them to a blind zeal and wrathful warfare against true piety, love, and peace, and teaching them to censure, backbite, slander, and prate against each other, for things which they never understood. In three books. I. PACIFYING PRINCIPLES about God's decrees, foreknowledge, providence, operations, redemption, grace, man's power, free will, justification, merits, certainty of salvation, perseverance, &c. II. A PACIFYING PRAXIS, or dialogue about the five articles, justification, &c., proving that men here contend almost only about ambiguous words and unrevealed things. III. PACIFYING DISPUTATIONS against some real errors which hinder reconciliation, viz., about physical predeterminations, original sin, the extent of redemption, sufficient grace, imputation of righteousness, &c. Written chiefly for posterity, when sad experience hath taught men to hate theological wars, and to love, and seek, and call for peace.'

I have quoted at large the extended and curious title of this folio volume, which appeared in 1675, because it affords a specimen of Baxter's style of conducting discussion, and serves, in a great measure, for an analysis of the work. In the preface, he gives a brief history of his own mind, of some of the controversies in which he had been engaged, and of his design in this publication in particular.

"My mind being these many years immersed in studies of this nature, and having also long wearied myself in searching what fathers and schoolmen have said of such things before us, and my genius abhorring confusion and equivocals, I came, by many years' longer study, to preceive, that most of the doctrinal controversies among Protestants, are far more about equivocal

words than matter; and it wounded my soul to perceive what work, both tyrannical, and unskilful disputing clergymen had made these thirteen hundred years in the world! Experience, since the year 1643, till this year 1675, hath loudly called me to repent of my own prejudices, sidings, and censurings of causes and persons not understood, and of all the miscarriages of my ministry and life, which have been thereby caused; and to make it my chief work to call men that are within my hearing to more peaceable thoughts, affections, and practices. And my endeavors have not been in vain, in that the ministers of the country where I lived, were very many of such a peaceable temper, and a great number more through the land, by God's grace, (rather than any endeavors of mine,) are so minded. But the sons of the cowl were exasperated the more against me, and accounted him to be against every man, that called all men to love and peace, and was for no man as in a contrary way.

"And now, looking daily in this posture, when God calleth me hence; summoned by an incurable disease to hasten all that ever I will do in this world; being incapable of prevailing with the present church disturbers, I do apply myself to posterity, leaving them the sad warning of their ancestors' distractions, as a pillar of salt, and acquainting them what I have found to be the cause of our calamities, and therein they will find the cure themselves."[m]

This work he fully expected would expose him to trouble and opposition from various quarters; but to his great astonishment, it met with no adversary during his life. He expected it would be the subject of controversy after his death; but in this respect also his anticipations have not been fulfilled. It still, I believe, remains without answer. It would be too much to infer from this, that all the positions maintained in it are generally admitted, or that no persons are disposed to dispute any of the views of its author. The size and character of the work have, I believe, deterred many persons from examining it with much care. A folio volume of 700 pages, replete with metaphysical distinctions, on every disputed point, in the most difficult doctrines of theology, has few charms for the general reader, and is even a formidable subject for the inquisitive, theological scholar to digest.

None of Baxter's works in English affords more striking illustration than this, of the amazing subtlety of his mind, as well as of the vastness of his reading, and his indefatigable application. The innumerable distinctions of the schoolmen, the debates among the Roman Catholic parties, and the contentions among Protestants, on all the subjects of which he treats,

(m) Preface.

were perfectly familiar to him. The discussion, on his part, is carried on with so much ease, that though deeply serious, he seems as if he were playing with the difficulties which have perplexed and confounded others. Instead of finding

"No end, in wand'ring mazes lost,"

he threads the labyrinths with prodigious adroitness, and finds an out-gate where others had found only a pit or an insurmountable barrier. The depths in which many have been engulfed, seem but as the element in which he sports without danger and without fear. With the most peaceable intentions, he carries war into every camp, and makes havoc of every foe; never being at a loss for a weapon, and never dismayed by the front or menace of an antagonist. Desirous of putting an end to contention, he furnished fresh and enlarged means for carrying it on, in the very abundance of the material of war, with which he supplied his adversaries, and the unceremonious manner in which he treated them. Amidst the dryness of metaphysical disquisition, however, and the keenness of theological debate, some fine passages occur, illustrative of the comprehensiveness of his views, and the ardor of his devotion. Deep piety is the prominent feature of all Baxter's works; and it never, perhaps, appears to more advantage, than when he is engaged in those debates, which were powerfully calculated to excite his own passions and those of others. It was the oil that smoothed the troubled waters in which he passed his life, and which was always uppermost whatever was passing beneath.

If the preceding volume appears to the reader a surprising effort of talent and industry, he will be still more astonished with the next work of Baxter in this department. I refer to his Latin work, the only one which he wrote in that language, 'Methodus Theologiæ Christianæ,' &c. It appeared in 1681, and consists of more than 900 large folio pages: enough to make about four volumes of the size of the new edition of his works. Of this immense undertaking he gives the following account.

"Having long been purposing to draw up a method of theology, I now began it. I never yet saw a scheme or method of physics or theology, which gave any satisfaction to my reason; though many have attempted to exercise more accurateness in distribution, than all others that went before them; especially Dudley Fenner, Tzegedine, Sohnius, Gomarus, Amesius, Treleatius, Wollebius, &c., and our present busy boaster, Dr. Nicholas Gibbon, in his scheme. I could never yet see any whose confusion, or great defects, I could not easily discover; but not so easily amend. I had been twenty-six years convinced that

dichotomizing will not do it, but that the divine trinity in unity hath expressed itself in the whole frame of nature and morality. I had long been thinking of a true method, and making some small attempts, but found myself insufficient for it; and so continued only thinking of it and studying it all these years. Campanella, I saw, had made the fairest attempt in the principles of nature, and Commenius after him; but yet, as I believe, he quite missed it in his first operative principles of heat and cold; mistaking the nature of cold and darkness. So he run his three principles, which he calleth primalities, into many subsequent notions, which were not provable or coherent. Having long read his physics, metaphysics. '*De Sensu Rerum*,' and '*Atheismus Triumphatus*,' I found him mention theology, which put me in hope that he had there also made some attempts; but I could never hear of any one that had seen any such book of his. At last, Mr. George Lawson's '*Theopolitica*' came out, which reduced theology to a method more political and right, in the main, than any I had seen before him; but he had not hit on the true method of the *Vestigia Trinitatis*. But the very necessity of explaining the three articles of baptism, and the three summaries of religion, the creed, Lord's-prayer, and decalogue, hath led all the common catechisms, that go that way, into a truer method than any of our exactest dichotomizers have hit on; not excepting Treleatius, Sohnius, or Amesius, which are the best.

"The nature of things convinced me that as physics are presupposed in ethics, and that morality is but the ordering of the rational nature and its actions; so that part of physics and metaphysics, which opens the nature of man and of God, who are the parties contracting, and the great subjects of theology and morality, is more nearly pertinent to a method of theology, and should have a larger place in it than is commonly thought of and given to it. Yet I know how uncouth it would seem, to put so much of these doctrines into a body of divinity; but the three first chapters of Genesis assured me that it was the Scripture method. When I had drawn up one scheme of the creation, and sent it to the Lord Chief Baron Hale, because of our often communications on such subjects; and being now banished from his neighborhood and the country where he lived, he received it with so great approbation, and importuned me so by letters to go on with that work, and not to fear being too much on philosophy, as added somewhat to my inclinations and resolutions. Through the great mercy of God, in my retirement at Totteridge, in a troublesome, smoky, suffocating room, in the midst of daily pains of the sciatica, and many worse, I set upon and finished all the schemes, and half the elucidations, in the

end of the year 1669 and the beginning of 1670; which cost me harder studies than any thing that ever I had before attempted."[n]

In a subsequent part of his 'Life' he speaks of the expense which this work put him to, and of his disappointment in regard to its sale. "The times were so bad for selling books, that I was fain to be myself at the charge of printing my 'Methodus Theologiæ.' Some friends contributed about eighty pounds towards it; it cost me one way or other about five hundred pounds; about two hundred and fifty pounds of which I received from those Nonconformists that bought them. The contrary party set themselves to hinder the sale of it, because it was mine, though else the doctrine of it, being half philosophical, and half conciliatory, would have pleased the learned part of them. But most lay it by as too hard for them, or as over scholastical and exact. I wrote it and my English 'Christian Directory,' to make up one complete body of theology; the Latin one the theory, and the English one the practical part. And the latter is commonly accepted because less difficult."[o]

This immense work, which occupied Baxter's mind so much during so many years, is divided into three parts. In the first he treats of the nature of things, in the second of the holy Scriptures, and in the third of the whole administration and practice of religion; in other words, the theory of natural religion, revealed religion, and the practical nature and design of religion. Or, taking another view of his plan, he treats of the kingdom of nature; the kingdom of grace, under the Mosaic economy; the kingdom of grace under the Gospel; and the kingdom of glory. He discusses, with great minuteness and at great length, the being and attributes of God; the constitution of the universe; the character and condition of man, both before and after the fall; the moral administration of God under the law; the mediatorial or evangelical system in all its branches, including the person and work of Christ, the doctrines, ordinances, and precepts, of the Gospel, and the future state of rewards and punishments. To give even a faint outline of the innumerable discussions and definitions contained in the work, is impossible; what precedes will afford however some idea of it.

He seems to have been partial to tracing a kind of trinity in unity in all things. A trinity of persons in the Godhead, the Father, the Word, and the Spirit; a trinity of principles in man, which he calls power, intellect, and will; corresponding imperfectly with three principles in the nature of God—life, intellect, and will. He finds three kingdoms, or dispensations, nature, grace, and glory; in nature he finds three principles,

(n) Life, part iii. pp. 69, 70.

(o) Life, part iii. p. 190.

light, heat, and motion; in the economy of grace he finds the Father governing, the Son saving, the Holy Spirit sanctifying; and God accomplishing all his designs of mercy in us by three principles, faith, hope, and love.

In the representation and working of this trinitarian scheme of philosophy, metaphysics, and morals, Baxter has displayed considerable ingenuity and vast labor. Many of his schemes or tables are formed with great care, and present some happy and useful arrangements and combinations. There is much, however, of what is fanciful and hypothetical in his system, and, taken as a whole, it is more calculated to amuse as a curious speculation or effort of genius, than to answer any important practical purpose. The work shows that the author is entitled to high rank among the metaphysico-theological writers of the period. I am, therefore, surprised that Mr. Morrell has entirely omitted him in his very useful work on 'The Elements of the History of Philosophy and Science.' Whatever may be thought of his opinions, Baxter, in point of genius, as a metaphysician, is not unworthy of a place on the same roll with Cudworth, and Leibnitz, and Clarke; and is unquestionably superior to Bramhall and Tenison, Wilkins, Cumberland, and More.

As Baxter wrote occasionally some Latin verse, as well as English poetry, I shall close the account of this proof of his stupendous industry by quoting the lines with which he concludes it.

The last work of Baxter in this department, which it is ne-

"Munde dolose vale: mihi vera palæstra fuisti:
Perficitur cursus: certa corona manet.
Vita fugax cessat: Præstant æterna caducis:
Mens superos visit: pulvere pulvis erit.
Excipe Christe tuum: tibi vixi: errata remitte:
Spe tibi commissum perfice Christe tuum.
Tu mortis mors: vitæ tu vita perennis:
Gloria nostra tua est gloria, lumen, amor.
Non loca, non cœtus, non hinc sperata videntur.
Optimus, Omnividens, Maximus illa videt." p

(p) I have observed, since writing the preceding account of the 'Methodus,' in a catalogue of his works, published at the end of his own edition of his 'Counsels to Young Men,' in 1682, a short analysis of this ponderous work, evidently written by himself. "It consists," he says, "of seventy-three tables, or methodical schemes, pretending to a juster methodizing of Christian verities, according to the matter and Scripture, than is yet extant; furnishing men with necessary distinctions on every subject; showing that trinity in unity is imprinted on the whole creation, and trichotomizing is the just distribution in naturals and morals. The first part of the kingdom of nature; the second of the kingdom of grace before Christ's incarnation; the third of the kingdom of grace and the Spirit, since the incarnation; the fourth of the kingdom of glory. All in one political method, in the efficience, constitution, and administration, namely, legislation, judgment, and execution. The first part mostly philosophical, with a full scheme of philosophy or ontology. The doctrine *de anima* most largely; with above two hundred select disputations; prolix ones on the trinity, predetermination, the faculties of the soul, original sin, and a multitude of controversies briefly decided." Had Baxter lived in the days of the schoolmen, he would have been the Thomas Aquinas, or Duns Scotus, of the period.

cessary to notice, was published only a short time before his death, and bears a most appropriate title for the conclusion of our account of his doctrinal views: 'An End of Doctrinal Controversies, which have lately troubled the Churches, by reconciling Explication without much Disputing.' 1691. 8vo.

In his preface he gives a most characteristic account of his reasons for engaging so much in controversy, and of his object in this book in particular. "Wars," he says, "are most dreaded and hated by the country where they are; but not so much by the soldiers, who by them seek their prey and glory, as by the suffering inhabitants that lose thereby their property and peace, who yet are forced, or drawn to be siders, lest they suffer for neutrality.

"Religious (irreligious) wars are of no less dismal consequence, being about God himself, his will, and word; and that which more nearly toucheth our souls and everlasting state, than our houses and worldly welfare do. Yet because men are more sensible of their corporal than their spiritual concerns, these dogmatical wars are far less feared, and too commonly made the study and delight, not only of the military clergy, but also of the seduced and sequacious laity: though those who have the wisdom from above, which is pure and peaceable, condole the church's calamity hereby; knowing that envy and strife, the earthly, sensual, and devilish wisdom, cause confusion and every evil work. It is a heinous aggravation, that the militants, being men consecrated to love and peace, profanely father their mischiefs upon God, and do all as for religion and the church. Having these four-and-forty years, at least, been deeply sensible of this sin, danger, and misery of Christians, I have preached much and written more against it; to confute those extremes which cause divisions, and to reconcile those that think they differ where they do not; sometimes, also, using importunate petitions and pleas for peace, to those that have power to give it or promote it, and that use either word or sword against it. And with the sons of peace it hath not been in vain; but with those that are engaged in faction and malicious strife, I am proclaimed to be the militant enemy of concord, for persuading them to concord; and writing many books for peace and love, is taken for writing them against these. Controversies I have written of but only to end them, and not make them; and who can reconcile them that never mentioneth them, or arbitrate in a cause unheard and not opened?

"But, readers, I must tell you that my title, 'An End of Doctrinal Controversies,' is not intended as prognostic, but as didactical and directive. I am far from expecting an end of controversies, while consecrated ignorance is by worldly interest, faction, and malice, mixed with pride sublimated to an envious zeal; and hath set up a trade of slandering all those that are

true peacemakers, not concurring with them to destroy it, on pretence of defending, by their unpeaceable, pernicious terms. He that will now be taken for a peacemaker, must be content to be so called by a few, even by the sect that he chooseth to please, and be contrarily judged of by all the rest. And this satisfieth some, because their faction seemeth better than others, be they ever so few; and others because their faction is great, or rich, or uppermost, how noxious and unpeaceable soever." [q]

The conclusion of the preface is worthy of the writer, and in his best style. "The glorious light will soon end all our controversies, and reconcile those who by unfeigned faith and love are united in the Prince of Peace, or Head, by love dwelling in God and God in them. But false-hearted, malignant, carnal worldlings, that live in the fire of wrath and strife, will find, so dying, the woful maturity of their enmity to holy unity, love, and peace; and that the causeless shutting the true servants of Christ out of their churches, which should be the porch of heaven, is the way to be themselves shut out of the heavenly Jerusalem. If those that have long reproached me as unfit to be in their church, and said *Ex uno disce omnes*, with their leader, find any unsound or unprofitable doctrine here, I shall take it for a great favor to be confuted, even for the good of others excluded with me, when I am dead."

This work does not contain much that is new or original. It consists of twenty-five chapters on most of the topics on which he had treated often and largely before; particularly on the points embraced in the Arminian and Calvinistic controversy. The divine decrees, election and reprobation; natural power and free-will, original sin, universal grace, and redemption; justification and faith; good works, merit, assurance, perseverance, &c., all come under his review; and on these and their collateral subjects he may be considered as delivering his last thoughts.

Having come literally to the end of Baxter's doctrinal writings, this is perhaps the most appropriate place for stating what appears to have been his sentiments on the great leading points which have long been controverted among Christians. The task is far from being an easy one, and I doubt whether I shall be able satisfactorily to perform it. Its difficulty arises from the multitude of Baxter's controversial writings, from the innumerable distinctions with which they are filled, and from the extended and diversified explanations that he gives of every term and phrase which he employs. His conscientiousness, his fear of being misunderstood, his anxiety to render every thing clear and unambiguous, his wish to reconcile opposite and conflicting

(q) Preface.

sentiments, and to humble the pride of contentious parties, by pointing out the errors to which their respective systems were liable; all tend to confound and to bewilder the reader of his controversial works, and to involve his real sentiments in considerable obscurity. Possessed of a mind uncommonly penetrating, he yet seems not to have had the faculty of compressing within narrow limits, his own views, or the accounts he was disposed to give of the views of others. When we expect he is about to state in a few words the sum of his belief, he flies off as it were at a tangent in pursuit of some adversary whom he has started, or proceeds to obviate some false constructions which has been put, or which may be put on what he is going to say. He either never returns to the subject, or when he does return, it is but to make another flight from it, and to leave us as before.

All this arose, not from any indisposition to be explicit; for no man was more disposed to give a full and candid exposition of all he thought, and felt, and did; but from the peculiar character of his mind. When, for instance, he proposes to give an account of faith, election, grace, perseverance, instead of giving a clear definition of the terms, and showing how their various senses may be accounted for from conventional usage, consistently with the original and primary idea, he proceeds at once to discuss the various meanings of such words as they are commonly used, the ambiguities which belong to them, and the uncertainty of their signification, till we advert to the circumstances in which they occur. Hence, instead of saying at once how he used such terms in his own writings, he tells us of many kinds of faith, various acts of grace, and different species of election, perseverance, &c. He is perpetually distinguishing things into physical and moral, real and nominal, material and formal. However important these distinctions are, they often render his writings tiresome to the reader, and his reasonings more frequently perplexed than satisfactory.

Baxter is generally understood to have pursued a middle course between Calvinism and Arminianism. That he tried to hold and to adjust the balance between two parties, and that he was most anxious to reconcile them, are very certain. But it seems scarcely less evident, that he was much more a Calvinist than he was an Arminian. His declared approbation of the Assembly's Confession, and of the Synod of Dort's decisions, with trifling exceptions, are, I think, decisive on this point: while the general train of his writing, when he loses sight of controversy, is much more allied to the system of the Genevese Reformer, than to that of the Dutch Remonstrants.

While this seems to me very apparent, it must be acknowledged, that if certain views, which have often been given of

Calvinism, are necessary to constitute a Calvinist, Richard Baxter was no believer in that creed. But an individual may hold the great leading outline of a particular system, without being expected to defend every dogma or iota in the writings of its founder. If this be implied in the profession of adherence to a common name, I doubt whether there is a Calvinist or an Arminian in the world.

Baxter, if I may collect his sentiments from a general knowledge of his writings, rather than from particular passages and statements, held that there is a portion of common grace bestowed on all, which, if rightly improved, would lead to most important and salutary results; that resistance to this constitutes a leading part of man's guilt: yet that this grace, from the indisposition of man, is not productive of saving effects, unless there is added to it a portion of special grace, which never fails to accomplish its design—the salvation of the individual on whom it is bestowed.

"As there is a common grace," he says, "actually extended to mankind, (that is, common mercies contrary to their merit,) so there is such a thing as sufficient grace, *in suo genere*, which is not effectual. By *sufficient grace* here, I mean such, without which man's will *cannot*, and with which it *can* perform, the commanded act toward which it is moved, when yet it doth not perform it." [r] In answer to the question, "Whether any men in the world have grace sufficient to repent and believe savingly who do not?" he says, after telling us that he knows nothing about the matter, "but that if we may conjecture upon probabilities, it seemeth most likely, that there is such a sufficient grace, or power, to repent and believe savingly in some that use it not, but perish." This seems to me very inexplicable.

He believed in election, but not that reprobation is its counterpart, as it is too commonly represented. In the following passage he seems to express this sentiment very fairly: "By all this it appeareth that *election* and *reprobation* go not *pari passu*, or are not equally ascribed to God; for in *election*, God is the cause of the means of salvation by his grace, and of all that truly tendeth to procure it. But on the other side, God is no cause of any sin which is the means and merit of damnation; nor the cause of damnation, but on the supposition of man's sin. So that sin is foreseen in the person decreed to damnation, but not caused, seeing the decree must be denominated from the effect and object. But in election, God decreeth to give us his grace, and be the chief cause of all our holiness; and doth not elect us to salvation on foresight that we will do his will, or be sanctified by ourselves without him." [s]

(r) End of Controversies, p. 162. (s) End of Controversies, p. 44.

He was accused as holding some very erroneous and dangerous notions, respecting the work of Christ. It was chiefly in reference to the Antinomian controversy, that these charges were brought. But Dr. Stillingfleet in his work on the 'Satisfaction of Christ,' fully vindicates him from all those charges which insinuated that his sentiments were allied to Socinianism. After quoting various passages from Baxter's writings, which had been found fault with, and showing the sense which they must bear, to be consistent with his sentiments elsewhere clearly expressed, Stillingfleet justly remarks on him: "Some liberty must be allowed to *metaphysical heads* to show their skill in distinctions, above other men; and sometimes when there is no cause for them. But we must not presently charge men with heresy, for new-invented distinctions; wherein they may be allowed to please themselves, so they do not cumber the faith with them; nor be too sharp upon their brethren for not apprehending the use of them." [t] So far were matters carried on this subject, by some of the keen supporters of the high Calvinistic view of the satisfaction of Christ, that after his death, some friend published, 'A Plea for the late Mr. Baxter, and those that speak of the sufferings of Christ as he does, in answer to Mr. Lobb's insinuated charge against them, in his late appeal to the Bishop of Worcester [Stillingfleet] and Dr. Edwards.' London, 1702.

On the subject of redemption, it is evident that he believed it to be, in a certain sense, general or universal; that Christ so died for all men, as to secure for them a certain portion of benefit. This view of his death he regarded as the ground of the general invitations of the Gospel, and of God's treatment of those who reject it. It is clear, however, that he also believed in what may be called a decretive speciality of the death of Christ. "When we speak of Christ's death," he says, "as a sacrifice for the sins of all the world, we mean no more but that *esse cognito et volito*, the undertaking was so far for all, as that all should have the conditional promise, or gift of life, by the merits of it." [u] On the other point he thus expresses himself: "He whose sufferings were primarily *satisfaction* for *sin*, were secondarily *meritorious* of the means to bring men to the intended end; that is, of the word and Spirit, by which Christ causeth sinners to believe: so that faith is a fruit of the death of Christ in a remote or secondary sense." [x] "Christ died for all, but not for all alike or equally; that is, he intended good to all, but not an equal good, with an equal intention." [y]

(t) Part ii. p. 159.
(u) Catholic Theology, part iii. p. 67. (x) Ibid. p. 69.
(y) End of Controv. p. 160. Baxter was as much a Calvinist on the subject of the extent of the atonement, as the late Rev. Andrew Fuller; and may be re-

The following statement of his sentiments on the subject of justifying faith, though it employs a redundancy of language, will not be objected to by many: "Justifying faith is not the reception of the knowledge or sense of our former justification, nor the belief that our sins were before actually pardoned, or that they are so; but it is the true belief of the Gospel, and the sincere acceptance of Christ as he is offered therein. That is, of Christ as Christ—as the Son of God, that hath given himself a sacrifice for sin, and offereth himself to me to be my Saviour from the guilt and power of sin, and eternal damnation; and to give me eternal glory, and to be my Teacher, and my King in ruling me, in order thereto. Men are not called to believe that they are justified, but to believe for justification." [z]

His views on the subject of the perseverance of the saints, have been noticed and stated already. While it appears that he would not have expressed himself so confidently on this subject as on some others, and did not rank it among truths of the first importance, he held substantially the Calvinistic view of it.

On the freedom of the will, he has generally been considered as holding what may be called liberal views, inclining more to liberty than to necessity. But I apprehend this was more in appearance than reality. In the following passages from his 'Catholic Theology,' he expresses sentiments in the fullest accordance with the strictest views of Calvinistic theology on this subject. They may be considered as giving the substance of his opinions on the whole controversy; so that I shall not trouble the reader with any more extracts.

"As all being is originally from God, so there is a continued divine causation of creatures, without which they would all cease, or be annihilated; which some call a continued creation, and some an emanation, and some a continued action, or operation, *ad rerum esse*. It is an intolerable error to hold, that God hath made the world, or any part of it, self-sufficient, or independent of himself, as to being, action, or perfection. We grant, therefore, that all the world is so far united to God, as to depend on his continued causality; and that the beams do not more depend on the sun; or light, heat, and motion, on the sun; or the branches, fruit, and leaves, more depend on the tree, than the creation on God. But yet these are not parts of God, as the fruit and leaves are of the tree, and as the beams are of the sun; but they are creatures, because God's

garded as distinguished from the other Calvinists of his time, as Fuller was distinguished from Abraham Booth. Of the controversy between Owen and Baxter, respecting the death of Christ, an account will be found in the Memoirs of Owen. The works of Booth and Fuller, on the same subject, are worth consulting.

(z) Confession of Faith, p. 166.

emanation or causation is creation, causing the whole being of the effect." [a]

"It is confessed that there is no substance beside himself, which God is not the maker of; nor any action of which he is not the first Cause. God may well be called the perfect first Cause of human actions, in that he giveth man all his natural faculties, and a power to act or not act at this time, or to choose this or that; and as the fountain of nature, and life, and motion, doth afford his influx necessary to this free agency. So that whenever any act is done, as an act *in generi*, God is the first Cause of it; for it is done by the power which he giveth and continueth, and by his vital influx, and there is no power used to produce it which is not given by God." [b]

"I conclude with this repeated profession, that I am fully satisfied, that all the rest of the controversies, about grace and nature, predestination and redemption, as they stand between the Synod of Dort and the Arminians, are of no greater moment than I have often expressed in this book; and that the true life of all the remaining difficulties is, in this controversy between the defenders of necessary predestination, and those of free-will; that is, not what free-will sinners have left, but whether ever in angels or innocent man, there was such a thing as a will, that can, or ever did, determine itself to a volition or nolition in *specie morali*, without the predetermining, efficient, necessitating premonition of God as the first Cause." [c]

I apprehend that I have now pursued the doctrinal sentiments of Baxter far enough for the satisfaction or gratification of the reader. While I consider him to have held sound and scriptural sentiments on all important subjects, I am very far from thinking that he always expressed himself correctly when discussing them. On the contrary, his language is frequently ambiguous or obscure; in many instances it is calculated to obstruct the inquirer, or occasion him great perplexity; and not seldom, it is so grossly incorrect, as to require to be most liberally construed in connexion with his well-known general sentiments, to avoid charging him with opinions subversive of the grace and glory of the Gospel.

I am fully aware that many passages might be selected from his controversial writings, of a very different tenor from those which I have quoted; and that it might be easy to prove Baxter a heretic, or at least guilty of gross self-contradiction, by detaching many of his statements from the connexion in which they occur. This, however, would be a species of injustice, which, though common enough among controversialists, ought to be discountenanced by every lover of truth. Baxter experi-

(a) Catholic Theology, part iii. p. 113.
(b) Catholic Theology, part i. p. 29.
(c) Ibid. part i. p. 118.

enced much of this treatment while he lived; and it followed his writings long after their author's death. The most perfect specimen of this with which I am acquainted, and which may be reverted to as a storehouse of the inconsistencies of Baxter, is a quarto volume with the following title: 'Baxterianism Barefaced; drawn from a literal Transcript of Mr. Baxter's, and the Judgment of others in the most radical Doctrines of Faith, compared with those of the Orthodox, both Conformist and Nonconformist,' &c. By Thomas Edwards, Esq. 1699.[d] This Nimrod among heresy hunters, endeavors to crucify Baxter between the Quakers and the Roman Catholics, exhibiting the doctrines of these two parties in every page, in parallel columns, and Baxter between them. Thus endeavoring to produce an impression that he was allied in sentiment to the Popish doctrine of the merit of good works on the one hand, and to the mistaken views of the Quakers, on the subject of divine influence, on the other. Curious coincidences do occur; but who that knows any thing of the real sentiments of Baxter, can have the least idea that his doctrinal system bears any resemblance to either of those parties?

To form a correct judgment of Baxter's sentiments, we must consult his practical and devotional writings. We must attend him, not when sitting in the critic's chair, or occupying the controversial arena, but when dealing with sinners, or conversing as a sinner himself, with God. His eloquent and fervid addresses to men, and his no less eloquent and burning addresses to the throne of the Most High, present such a view of his real sentiments, as cannot be mistaken. In these compositions, he is thinking of no difficulties in his theological system, or in the theological systems of others; he is only intent on presenting, in the most simple and impressive forms, the great doctrines of the fall and corruption of our nature, the fulness and freeness of divine grace, and the necessity of faith and repentance. The love of God, as manifested to apostate transgressors, in the gift and sacrifice of his own Son, is then the entire theme of his

(d) I know nothing of this Edwards, except from his book. He seems to have been one of the high Calvinists of the time, who entered very deeply into the Christian controversy. He tried his poetical, as well as his polemical, powers on Baxter. It was the fashion to write epitaphs for this excellent man; and the following is the doggerel slander of Thomas Edwards, Esq.:—

"Baxter, farewell! *Hen ffydd's** epitome,
Rome's vatican and conclave fell in thee;
St. Omer's mourn! for thy disciples will
By this find lesser grist come to thy mill.
To say no more, write on this tomb, Here lies
The mirror of self inconsistencies:
Or rather thus, Papal conformity
Hid under Reformation here doth lie."—p. 223.

* This he interprets, "Rome's Faith;" literally, "Old Faith."

discourse, as it was the only ground of his own hope. Nothing of conditional justification, of terms and qualifications, of the merit of works, or the limitations of the divine call, is then to be found. All is represented as a scheme of sovereign mercy, reigning through righteousness, and dispensed with infinite generosity by Jesus Christ, our Lord.

All his own experience was that of a man who felt himself to be a chief sinner, saved solely by the mercy of God. This appears in the deep humility of his soul, in his fervent gratitude, in his holy life, and in his happy, though humble, state of mind, in the prospect of death. There was nothing of metaphysics in the influence of Baxter's religion, however much of it belonged to the manner of stating his sentiments. His views of the corruption of human nature, and of the responsibility of man, led him to dwell much on these topics, and to urge them powerfully on all sinners. To salvation as the cure of sin, he attached as much importance as to salvation considered as deliverance from its punishment. Hence he cultivated this curative process in himself, and recommended its cultivation to others. He could find happiness only in likeness to God, which constituted, therefore, his constant desire, as it was the object of his most earnest recommendation.

While satisfied that among Baxter's sentiments, no important or vital error will be found, yet in the style and method in which he too generally advocated or defended them, there is much to censure. The wrangling and disputatious manner in which he presented many of his views, was calculated to gender an unsanctified state of mind in persons who either abetted or opposed his sentiments. His scholastic and metaphysical style of arguing is unbefitting the simplicity of the Gospel, and cannot fail to injure it wherever such is employed. It not only savors too much of the spirit of the schools, and the philosophy of this world; but places the truths of revelation on a level with the rudiments of human science.

I am not sure whether certain effects which began early in the last century to appear among the Presbyterian part of the Nonconformists, may not be traced in some degree to the speculative and argumentative writings of Baxter. His influence over this class of his brethren, was evidently very great. He contributed more than any other man to mitigate the harsh and forbidding aspect which the Presbyterians presented during the civil wars and the commonwealth. This was well, but he did not stop here. He was inimical to all the existing systems of doctrine and discipline then contended for, or ever before known in the world; while he did not present any precisely defined system as his own. He opposed Calvinism; he opposed Arminianism; he would not allow himself to be considered an

Episcopalian, in the ordinary acceptation of the word; he denied that he was a Presbyterian, and scorned to be thought an Independent. He held something in common with them all, and yet he was somewhat different from all. He contended for a system more general and more liberal than was then approved; and, as we have stated, wished to place a variety of theological truths on grounds belonging rather to philosophy or metaphysics, than to revelation.

On himself, this species of latitudinarianism produced little injurious effect, but I fear it had a baneful influence on others. The rejection of all human authority and influence in religion, requires to be balanced by a very strong sense of the divine authority, to prevent its generating a state of mind more characterised by pride of intellect, and independence of spirit, than by the humility and diffidence which are essential features in the Christian character. It is a singular fact, that the Presbyterians, though at first more rigid in their doctrinal views, and more exclusive in their spirit and system of church government, than the Independents, became before the death of Baxter the more liberal party. High views began to be ascribed by them to their now moderate brethren; and, to avoid the charge of Antinomianism, which Baxter was too ready to prefer against such as differed from some of his views, the Presbyterians seem gradually to have sunk into a state of low moderate orthodoxy, in which there was little of the warmth or vitality of evangelical religion.

In further illustrations of the influence now adverted to, it must be remarked, that the first stage in that process of deterioration which took place among the Presbyterian dissenters, was generally characterised by the term Baxterianism: a word to which it is difficult to attach a definite meaning. It denotes no separate sect or party, but rather a system of opinions on doctrinal points, verging towards Arminianism, and which ultimately passed to Arianism and Socinianism. Even during Baxter's own life, while the Presbyterians taxed the Independents with Antinomianism, the latter retorted the charge of Socinianism, or at least of a tendency towards it, in some of the opinions maintained both by Baxter and others of that party. To whatever cause it is to be attributed, it is a melancholy fact, that the declension which began even at this early period in the Presbyterian body, went on slowly but surely, till from the most fervid orthodoxy, it finally arrived at the frigid zone of Unitarianism.

I wish not to be understood as stating, that Baxter either held any opinions of this description, or was conscious of a tendency in his sentiments towards such a fearful consummation; but, that there was an injurious tendency in his manner of dis-

cussing certain important subjects. It was subtle, and full of logomachy; it tended to unsettle, rather than to fix and determine; it gendered strife, rather than godly edifying. It is not possible to study such books, as his 'Methodus,' and his 'Catholic Theology,' without experiencing, that we are brought into a different region from apostolic Christianity: a region of fierce debate and altercation about words, and names, and opinions; in which all that can be said for error is largely dwelt upon, as well as what can be said for truth. The ambiguities of language, the diversities of sects, the uncertainties of human perception and argument, are urged, till the force of revealed truth is considerably weakened, and confidence in our own judgment of its meaning greatly impaired. Erroneous language is maintained to be capable of sound meaning, and the most scriptural phrases to be susceptible of unscriptural interpretation, till truth and error almost change places, and the mind is bewildered, confounded, and paralysed.

Into this mode of discussing such subjects, was this most excellent man led, partly by the natural constitution of his mind, which has often been adverted to; partly by his ardent desire of putting an end to the divisions of the Christian world, and producing universal concord and harmony. He failed where success was impossible, however plausible might have been the means which he employed. He understood the cause of difference and contention better than their remedies; hence the measures which he used, frequently aggravated instead of curing the disease. His controversial writings, it is said, "were never answered." To answer them was impracticable. They were entrenched within such lines of words, such barriers of technicalities, and such interminable series of distinctions, that any approach to the main subject was rendered utterly hopeless. Baxter was clad in an impenetrable coat of mail of his own framing, which not only entirely protected its wearer, but presented innumerable points, that rendered grappling with him exceedingly dangerous to the assailant. Conscious of his own integrity and safety, and not unconscious of his giant strength, he hurled fearless defiance at all adversaries, and quietly waited the onset.

Meanwhile that cause which he had so much at heart, lost rather than gained, from these means of promoting it. Error was not overthrown or dislodged; the chief difficulties attaching to certain truths, remained where they had ever been; for the obscurity hanging over the divine purposes and administration, continued as profound as ever. In all this we are taught the imbecility of man, and how little he is capable of achieving, even with the best intentions, without the special blessing of God. Man's apparent intelligence and wisdom have often been considered as of vast importance to the interests of truth and

of heaven; but have nearly as often as they have been thus regarded, occasioned disappointment and regret. It is thus God enforces his own injunction; "Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom; but let him that glorieth, glory in the Lord."

While a portion of evil, probably resulted from Baxter's mode of conducting controversy, and no great light was thrown by him on some of the dark and difficult subjects which he so keenly discussed, I have no doubt he contributed considerably to produce a more moderate spirit towards each other, between Calvinists and Arminians, than had long prevailed. Though he satisfied neither party, he must have convinced both, that great difficulties exist on the subjects in debate, if pursued beyond a certain length; that allowance ought to be made by each, for the weakness or prejudices of the other; and that genuine religion is compatible with some diversity of opinion respecting one or all of the five points. In as far as such an effect has arisen from his doctrinal writings, the church of Christ has derived benefit from them. If my opinion may be expressed at the end of this long chapter, in a single sentence, I would say, Baxter was probably such an Arminian as Richard Watson; and as much a Calvinist as the late Dr. Edward Williams.

CHAPTER III.

WORKS ON CONVERSION.

Introductory Remarks—'Treatise of Conversion'—'Call to the Unconverted'—'Now or Never'—'Directions for a Sound Conversion'—'Directions to the Converted'—'Character of a Sound Christian'—'Mischiefs of Self-ignorance'—The Countess of Balcarras—Controversy with Bishop Morley—'A Saint or a Brute'—Various smaller Treatises—Concluding Observations.

The class of books to which this chapter is devoted, must ever rank high, perhaps I should say highest, among the works of Baxter. As they treat of the most important subject which can occupy the attention of mankind in its degenerate state; so they discuss that subject with a power which is probably unequalled in human writings. While Baxter's talents were adequate to any subject to which they might be directed, the conversion of men was the grand object to which he devoted them, in the fullest extent in which they could be exercised. Other things he might resort to as recreation, or submit to as duty; this employment constituted his sacred delight. His whole soul was here eminently at home; he revels and luxuriates in it, exulting in the privilege of calling sinners to repentance, and thus promoting the glory of his Lord and Master.

In this department of writing, I am not aware that he had properly any predecessor in the English language. Among the works both of the episcopal and puritan divines, many excellent discourses on most branches of Christian faith and duty had previously appeared. The Puritans excelled especially in the expository and didactic departments of instruction; while many Conformists produced very able treatises on the several branches of theological and moral truth. But by no one nor all of them was produced such a mass of pungent and powerful addresses to the consciences of ignorant, ungodly, and thoughtless men, as by Baxter. Conversion in all its important aspects, and unutterably important claims, had not before been discussed, at least in our language; nor had any man previously employed so boundless a range of topics, in conjunction with such an energetic and awakening style of addressing sinners.

To excel in this mode of preaching, requires talents and properties of no ordinary kind. There must be a combination of

scriptural knowledge and ardent piety, with a correctness of thinking, as well as a fervency of imagination and manner, which are rarely found in one individual. Incorrect notions of the boundless grace and mercy of the Gospel, led some of Baxter's predecessors in the awakening style of preaching, to deal out the unmitigated thunders of the law. These, however, will roll in the ears of sinners in vain unless mellowed with the meek and persuasive allurements of the Gospel. Baxter knew how to connect them, so as to alarm and convince, without driving to despair. Taylor could describe the loathsomeness and guilt of the sinner, and the certainty as well as awfulness of his danger, with an exhaustless and withering power of illustration. He could inculcate penance and mortification with great force of argument. But his manner partook more of monkish severity,—of the gloom and austerity of the cloister—than of the faithfulness and tenderness of Jesus and his apostles. Baxter's severity never partakes of the nature of misanthropy. He never seems to take pleasure in wounding. He employs the knife with an unsparing hand; but that hand always appears to be guided by a tender, sympathising heart. He denounces sin in language of tremendous energy, and exposes its hideous nature by the light of the flames of hell itself; but it is to urge the sinner to flee from the wrath to come, and to lay hold on the hope set before him. He never appears as the minister of divine vengeance, come to execute wrath, and to make men miserable before the time; but as an angel of mercy, brandishing a flaming sword to drive men to the tree of life.

In the writings of Owen and Howe, and the preachers of the same school, doctrinal discussion, and elaborate argument in support and illustration of Gospel truths, are more prominent than their addresses to sinners. This, perhaps, may be accounted for, by the different circumstances of the people whom they addressed. Their congregations consisted chiefly of a select company of believers, or of those who made a credible profession of the Gospel. Hence their discourses were chiefly employed in instructing and building up. Baxter's hearers in Kidderminster, where most of his works of this class were produced, were of a different description; a large mass of ignorant, wicked persons, chiefly in the lower walks of life. When he entered on his labors among them, there was scarcely a vestige of religion in the place. He studied the best methods of gaining their attention, and of rousing them to repentance and reformation. How admirably he succeeded is evident, both from the discourses which he produced, and the effects which resulted from them. The character of his early preaching remained, as is generally the case, to the last. The Christian minister who has this kind of work to do (and what Christian

minister has it not to do more or less?) would therefore do well, to study this portion of Baxter's writings.

To excel in this kind of preaching, he was eminently qualified. He possessed an untiring capability of application; an uncommon degree of acuteness and nicety of discernment; a profound knowledge of the depths of iniquity belonging to the human heart; a fearless fidelity in the discharge of his duty; a constant sense of the divine presence on his mind, along with an impression, which seems never to have left him, that death was just at hand.

> "He preached, as never sure to preach again,
> And as a dying man to dying men!" e

He was gifted with exhaustless powers of expression, and an exuberance of imagination which supplied unfailing stores of language and illustration. He had also a soft, flexible, melodious voice; a tenderness, pathos, and solemnity of manner, which clothed all he said with dignity and love.

With such qualifications, presenting themselves even on the very surface of those discourses by which his popularity is still maintained, it is not surprising that, like some distinguished men in other professions, he carried those labors in which he had no prototype, to a perfection which has never been excelled. It might be easy to produce specimens, both from Baxter's time and since, of greater profundity of thought, and greater originality of conception; of more refinement of language,—though his language is often peculiarly happy; of more accuracy of argument and statement; of detached passages more tremendous or more touching, than any occurring in Baxter's writings on Conversion: but we have nothing that will admit of comparison with them as a whole—nothing so pointed—so awful—and yet so full of tenderness and compassion.

It is to this preaching we must chiefly look, as the means of those amazing effects, which, under divine influence, were produced at Kidderminster, while Baxter labored there. We have no account of any remarkable outpouring of the Spirit,—of any thing corresponding with what is called, in America, a revival,—during the period of Baxter's residence in that town. But the effects produced by his ministry are perfectly intelligible to all who look at the means employed, and attend to the promised blessing of God in connexion with them. Baxter was a man of faith and prayer; he was also a man of unwearied labor. He preached in season, and out of season. He was an instrument fit for the work, and diligently employed all the means which God had put in his power. While he did so, he

(e) Baxter's 'Poetical Fragments,' p. 30.

found, what every faithful laborer will also find, that he did not labor for nought, or spend his strength in vain.

These general observations will supersede the necessity of repeating the same things, on noticing the successive publications relative to Conversion, which he produced; and to which we shall now proceed.

The first work of this class is a 'Treatise of Conversion; preached and now published for the use of those that are strangers to a true conversion, especially the grossly ignorant and ungodly.' 1657. 4to.[f] "It was the substance," he says, "of some plain sermons on conversion, which Mr. Baldwin, who lived in my house, and learned the short-hand character in which I wrote my pulpit notes, had transcribed. Though I had no leisure for this or other writings, to take much care of the style, or to add any ornaments, or citations of authors, I thought it might better pass as it was, than not at all; and that if the author missed the applause of the learned, the book might yet be profitable to the ignorant, as it proved, through the great mercy of God."[g]

He dedicates the volume, in a most affectionate and faithful manner, to the inhabitants of the borough and foreign of Kidderminster. A few sentences of this address deserve to be quoted, as they explain the nature of the work, and illustrate the spirit of the man.

"As it was the unfeigned love of your souls that hath hitherto moved me much to print what I have done, that you might have the help of those truths which God hath acquainted me with, when I am dead and gone, so is it the same affection that hath persuaded me here to send you this familiar discourse. It is the same that you heard preached: and the reasons that moved me to preach it, do move me now to publish it; that if any of you have forgot it, it may be brought to your remembrance; or if it worked not upon you in the hearing, yet, in the deliberate perusal it may work. I bless the Lord that there are so many among you that know, by experience, the nature of conversion, which is the cause of my abundant affection towards you, above any other people that I know. But I see that there is no place or people on earth that will answer our desires, or free us from those troubles that constantly attend our earthly state. I have exceeding cause to rejoice in very many of you; but in many, also, I have cause of sorrow. Long have I travailed, (as Paul speaks, Gal. iv. 19,) as in birth, till Christ be formed in you. For this have I studied, and prayed, and preached; for this have I dealt with you in private exhortation; for this have I sent you all such books as I conceived suitable to your needs; and yet, to the grief of my soul, I must speak it,

(f) Works, vol. vii (g) Life, part i. p. 114.

the lives of many of you declare that this great work is yet undone. I believe God, and therefore I know that you must every soul of you be converted, or condemned to everlasting punishment. And, knowing this, I have told it you over and over again. I have showed you the proof and reasons of it, and the certain misery of an unconverted state: I have earnestly besought you and begged of you to return, and if I had tears at command, I should have mixed all these exhortations with my tears; and if I had but time and strength, (as I have not,) I should have made bold to have come once more to you, and sit with you in your houses, and entreated you on the behalf of your souls, even twenty times for once that I have entreated you. The God that sent me to you knows that my soul is grieved for your blindness, and stubborness, and wickedness, and misery, more than for all the losses and crosses in the world; and that my heart's desire and prayer for you to God, is that you may yet be converted and saved." [h]

A man who speaks in this earnest and affectionate tone, cannot fail to be heard. The people must have been impressed with his sincerity: his love gained their confidence; and his plain and striking appeals thus found access to their consciences and hearts.

The treatise itself is founded on Matt. xviii. 3, "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." In a series of chapters, he explains the nature of conversion; proves that none but those who are converted can be saved; illustrates the misery of the unconverted, and the benefits of conversion; and discusses at length twenty hinderances to conversion.

It is easy to conceive of a more logical arrangement than what is here described and followed. Exceptions might also be taken to some of Baxter's definitions and distinctions, though they do not affect any thing of importance. There will also be perceived an occasional redundancy and repetition in some of his thoughts; for which there is always an apology in preaching: yet it is altogether a very admirable treatise. He thus beautifully apologises for the plainness and earnestness of his manner:

"The commonness and the greatness of men's necessity, commanded me to do any thing that I could for their relief, and to bring forth some water to cast upon this fire, though I had not at hand a silver vessel to carry it in, nor thought it the most fit. The plainest words are the most profitable oratory in the weightiest matters. Fineness is for ornament, and delicacy for delight; but they answer not necessity, though sometimes

(h) Works, vol. vii. Preface, pp. iii. iv.

they may modestly attend that which answers it. Yea, when they are conjunct, it is hard for the necessitous hearer or reader to observe the matter of ornament and delicacy, and not to be carried from the matter of necessity; and to hear or read a neat, concise, sententious discourse, and not to be hurt by it; for it usually hindereth the due operation of the matter, keeps it from the heart, stops it in the fancy, and makes it seem as light as the style. We use not to stand upon compliment, when we run to quench a common fire, nor to call men to it by an eloquent speech. If we see a man fall into fire or water, we stand not upon mannerliness in plucking him out, but lay hands upon him as we can, without delay." [i]

Common as preaching is among us, the style best adapted to the pulpit, and to the great subjects which are there discussed, is, I fear, very imperfectly understood. In some instances the language of the preacher is correct, chaste, classical: but the discussion is flat, cold and unimpressive. The truth is neither concealed nor misrepresented: but there is an entire absence of "thoughts that breathe, and words that burn." In other cases, the pulpit is degraded by vulgarity and oddity, or every kind of low buffoonery. This is done for the avowed purpose of gaining attention, and rendering truth familiar. Such persons would seem to forget that it is practicable to be plain, without becoming low; to strike and secure attention, without becoming harlequins and buffoons. Who ever heard of men being converted by apes and mountebanks? in a third class, finery and ornament are mistaken for eloquence; and the Gospel is supposed to be preached with power, when it is little better than buried under the rubbish of words and masses of gorgeous or tawdry figures.

All these and many other vices which accompany preaching, arise from preachers being occupied with something else than their subject and the eternal good of their audience. If the mind is but sufficiently impressed with these, there will be no disposition to cultivate either the ludicrous or the fine, the lofty or the low, in setting forth the words of eternal life. Simplicity with earnestness is the only style of speaking which becomes the ministry of the Gospel. The one will enable the preacher to convey truth to the understanding, the other will give him the command of the heart. Impressed himself, he will impress others, and what he himself clearly understands, he will make intelligible to his audience. These were the things which Baxter studied; and they constituted the power and charm of his eloquence. Thousands hung upon his lips when he preached; not to be dazzled or amused, but to be convinced of

(i) Works, vol. vii. Preface, p. ix.

their danger, or led to the remedy. His popularity arose chiefly from his impassioned earnestness and solemnity. His hearers had no opportunity to be thinking of the man, or of any thing about him; while he spoke, their thoughts were fixed on themselves, or on Christ; and when they left him, they were compelled to think and to speak, not of Richard Baxter, but of the awful or delightful subject which he had brought before them.

His 'Treatise on Converstion,' was followed shortly after by the most widely-circulated of all its publications, 'A Call to the Unconverted to turn and live, from the Living God.'[k] The preface to this treatise is dated Dec. 10, 1657. The former treatise had appeared in June, of the same year. Of a work so well known as the 'Call to the Unconverted,' it is scarcely necessary for me to speak. It is worthy, however, of historical record, that he was induced to undertake these works on Conversion, by Archbishop Usher. That eminent man, no doubt, perceived what constituted the *forté* of Baxter, and, therefore, suggested an employment so well suited to his powers. The following passage of his preface to the 'Call' contains this circumstance, and gives some account of the order in which he intended to pursue his task.

"In the short acquaintance I had with that reverend, learned servant of Christ, Bishop Usher, he was oft, from first to last, importuning me to write a Directory for the several ranks of professed Christians, which might distinctly give each one their portion; beginning with the unconverted, and then proceeding to the babes in Christ, and then to the strong; and mixing some special helps against the several sins that they are addicted to. By the suddenness of his motion at our first congress, I perceived it was in his mind before; and I told him, both that it was abundantly done by many already, and that his unacquaintedness with my weakness might make him think me fitter for it than I was. But this did not satisfy him, he still made it his request. I confess I was not moved by his reasons, nor did I apprehend any great need of doing more than is done in that way; nor that I was likely to do more. And, therefore, I parted from him without the least purpose to answer his desire. But since his death his words often came into my mind; and the great reverence which I bore to him, did the more incline me to think with some complacency of his motion. Having of late intended to write a 'Family Directory,' I began to apprehend how congruously the forementioned work should lead the way; and the several conditions of men's souls be spoken of, before we come to the several relations. Hereupon I resolved, by God's assistance, to proceed in the order following. First, to speak to the impenitent, unconverted sinners,

(k) Works, vol. vii.

who are not yet so much as purposing to turn; or at least are not setting about the work. With these, I thought, a wakening persuasive was a more necessary means than mere directions; for directions suppose men willing to obey them. But the persons that we have first to deal with, are wilful and asleep in sin, and as men that are past feeling, having given themselves over to sin with greediness. My next work must be for those that have some purposes to turn, and are about the work, to direct them for a thorough and a true conversion that they miscarry not in the birth. The third part must be directions for the younger and weaker sort of Christians, that they may be established, built up, and persevere. The fourth part, directions for lapsed and backsliding Christians, for their safe recovery. Beside these, there is intended some short persuasions against some special errors of the times, and against some common killing sins. As for directions to doubting troubled consciences, that is done already; and the strong I shall not write directions for, because they are so much taught of God already. And then the last part is intended more especially for families, as such, directing the several relations in their duties." [1]

The 'Call' appears to be the substance of a sermon which he had previously preached from Ezekiel xxxiii. 11. He prefixes to it a prefatory address to "all unsanctified persons who shall read the book, especially his hearers in the parish of Kidderminister;" which is itself a powerfully-awakening sermon; full of the most faithful statements and expostulations. The results in the conversion of men, arising from this book, have been greater probably than have arisen from any other mere human performance. His own account of the effects produced by it, which had come to his knowledge long before his death, must be given in his own language. And as it has passed through editions almost innumerable since, the good effected by it is beyond all calculation.

"God hath blessed it with unexpected success beyond all the rest that I have written, except the 'Saint's Rest.' In a little more than a year, there were about twenty thousand of them printed by my own consent, and about ten thousand since; besides many thousands by stolen impression, which poor men stole for lucre's sake. Through God's mercy, I have had information of almost whole households converted by this small book, which I set so light by; and, as if all this in England, Scotland, and Ireland, were not mercy enough to me, God, since I was silenced, hath sent it over on his message to many beyond the seas. For when Mr. Elliot had printed all the Bible in the

(l) Works, vol. vii. pp. 331, 332.

Indians' language, he next translated this my 'Call to the Unconverted,' as he wrote to us here: and though it was here thought prudent to begin with the 'Practice of Piety,' because of the envy and distaste of the times against me, he had finished it before that advice came to him. Yet God would make some further use of it; for Mr. Stoop, the pastor of the French church in London, being driven hence by the displeasure of superiors, was pleased to translate it into elegant French, and print it in a very curious letter; and I hope it will not be unprofitable there, nor in Germany, where it is printed in Dutch."[m]

Dr. Bates tells us, in his funeral sermon for Baxter, that six brothers were at one time converted by this book. It has been translated into Welsh and Gælic, and most of the European languages; and Cotton Mather, in his life, mentions an Indian Prince who was so affected with it, that he kept reading it with tears till he died.

The nature of this subject naturally leads me to connect with the 'Call,' the next tract of this class, which we shall notice, though it did not immediately follow, 'Now or NEVER;'[n] a discourse founded on Ecclesiastes ix. 10; and in which "the holy, serious, diligent believer is justified, encouraged, excited, and directed; and the opposers and neglecters convinced by the light of Scripture and reason." These tracts are so similar in character, style, and design, that I know not where the preference is due in point of excellence. They are both characterised by one strongly-marked feature—INTENSE EARNESTNESS—the earestness of the author's deep convictions of the awfully-perilous condition of unconverted men. This was the result of the clear and powerful perceptions which he had of the present guilt and wretchedness, and the future loss and ruin of such persons. It is not the working up of mental excitement till it becomes passion; nor is it a labored effort of human eloquence, which we admire in these treatises. Baxter was thinking of every thing rather than of the clothing of his thoughts, his words or figures. He was thinking of the character and desert of a sinner, and intent only on arresting him before it might be too late. His object was to gain his attention, to convince his understanding, and to impress his heart. For this purpose he describes, he reasons, he expostulates, he threatens, he implores. He avails himself of every topic calculated to alarm or to allure. The character of God—the responsibility of man—the uncertainty of time—the misery of hell—the glory of heaven—are all brought forward and urged with an irresistible force of language, and in the tenderest appeals to the conscience and the heart.

Baxter's 'Call' stands advantageously contrasted with a trea-

(m) Life, part i. p. 115. (n) Works, vol. vii.

tise of a similar title, Law's 'Serious Call to a devout and holy Life.' I am far from thinking lightly of this work. It contains much important truth, and much serious and valuable admonition; but it wants what Baxter's treatises eminently possess, the simplicity of evangelical doctrine. Law was more of the school of Behmen than of Paul. He obscures and mystifies what Baxter represents in the simplest manner. Law's 'Call' is like the Egyptian taskmasters, who compelled the Israelites to make bricks without straw; it is an attempt to make men devout and holy without supplying sufficiently the means, by which alone, with divine influence, the effects can be produced. Baxter seeks to influence the mind and character entirely by those representations of evangelical truth, which must lie at the foundation of all comfortable and acceptable religion. The work of this celebrated mystic naturally tends to a species of self-righteous Pharisaism; the work of the Nonconformist, to make an humble, holy, and happy Christian.

The work of Baxter I cannot help thinking preferable to a similar production of one of his own brethren, Joseph Alleine's 'Alarm;' to which indeed Baxter writes a long preface, where he unites with the author in sounding the alarm to the unconverted. Alleine's tract is written in a style of almost unmitigated severity. There is a forbidding sternness in it. Full of "the terrors of the Lord," it is calculated to frighten rather than to persuade. Some of the topics also are not happily chosen, or discreetly urged; yet it is a powerful appeal, and on some minds may be fitted to prepare the way for the consideration of the "mercies of the Lord." Baxter's 'Call' is adapted for more general usefulness. It breathes a softer and kindlier spirit, while it is no less pointed and faithful than the production of his friend and brother.

The next work, according to Baxter's own arrangement, which appeared, with a preface dated May 29, 1658, is his 'Directions and Persuasions to a sound Conversion for prevention of that Deceit and Damnation of Souls, and of those Scandals, Heresies, and desperate Apostasies, that are the consequents of a Counterfeit and Superficial Change.'[o] "Having," he says, "in my 'Call to the Unconverted,' endeavored to awaken careless souls, and persuade the obstinate to turn and live, I have here spoken to them that seem to be about the work, and given them some directions and persuasions to prevent their perishing in the birth, and so to prevent that hypocrisy, which else they are like to be formed into; and the deceit of their hearts, the error of their lives, and the misery at their death, which are likely to follow. That they live not as those

(o) Works, vol. viii.

that flatter God with their mouths, and 'lie unto him with their tongues, because their heart is not right with him, neither are they steadfast in his covenant.' Lest, denying deep entertainment and rooting to the seed of life, or choking it by the radicated, predominant love and cares of the world, they wither when the heat of persecution shall break forth: and lest, building on the sands, they fall when the winds and storms arise, and their fall be great: and so 'they go out from us, that they may be made manifest that they were not of us; for if they had been of us they would no doubt have continued with us.'"[p]

This work, through some mismanagement on the part of the bookseller, was at first published at too high a price, and, in consequence, had a less extensive circulation than some of Baxter's other books. It is well calculated to undeceive those who take it for granted that they have been the subjects of a divine change, when no such change has been effected. While great alarm is experienced, it is not so well fitted to be useful, as after the alarm has subsided, and the conscience begins to be satisfied, though the great change has not taken place. Baxter's directions for conversion are frequently so expressed, as if men could accomplish the change themselves; or as if they would do certain things with a view to their being converted. For instance, he says, "If you would be truly converted, be sure that you make an absolute resignation of yourselves, and all that you have, to God." Now, it is as plain as possible that only a converted person will make such a surrender as this. The same remark will apply to many other of his directions. No man, however, had a stronger conviction than he, that conversion is peculiarly the work of God. His views of its nature and consequences, as well as his general sentiments, afford the most satisfactory evidence, that this must have been the case. But he did not always sufficiently discriminate what belongs to God, from what falls within the province of man, in the affairs of religion. He did not distinguish between *our* using all suitable means to convert men, and calling upon men to do certain things to convert themselves. Almost every thing he said, considered as an appeal to the understandings and the consciences of sinners, is strictly correct as means which God has appointed his servants to employ for the conversion of the world; but when put in the form of requesting sinners to perform certain acts with a view to God's converting them, the nature and tendency of the address are considerably altered. This gives to some of Baxter's preaching the aspect of a self-righteous system, in which the work of salvation is divided between God and man. But nothing could be

(p) Works, Preface, p. v.

further from his design. He meant, in fact, nothing more than is intended by those solemn appeals in which the prophets and apostles call upon men to repent, to turn, to be converted, to make to them new hearts and right spirits, that they may live and not die. This language is the voice of God to the sinner, sleeping in security, and dead in his sins; it is the moral means suited to the understanding, and appointed to induce consideration and repentance, which the divine Spirit brings to bear on the heart, while the heart receives the impression from which salvation and eternal life arise.

Next to this in order, though following after a considerable interval, is his 'Directions to the Converted for their Establishment, Growth, and Perseverance.'[q] It was preached in a lecture at Kidderminster in 1658, but was not published by Baxter till 1668. The dedication is an affecting address, to his "Dearly Beloved, the Church at Kidderminster." In this letter he expresses great respect for them, and unabated confidence and affection. "The things which I especially loved in you," he says, "I will freely praise, which were a special measure of humility, a plain simplicity in religion, a freedom from common errors, a readiness to receive the truth, a catholic temper, without addictedness to any sect; a freedom from schism and separating ways, and a unity and unanimity in religion; a hatred and disowning of the usurpations, perturbations, and rebellions against the civil government, and an open bearing of your testimony in all these cases; together with seriousness in religion, and sober, righteous, charitable, and godly conversation. But yet, with all this, which is truly amiable, I know you have your frailties and imperfections. The weaker sort of Christians, either in knowledge or in holiness, to say nothing of the unsound, are the greater number in the best congregation that I ever yet knew. And what may be your case these eight years, since I have been separated from your presence, I cannot tell, though, through the mercy of God, I hear not of your declining. It is our sin which hath parted us asunder, let us lay the blame upon ourselves. I have now done expecting my ancient comforts in laboring among you any more. For these six years time, in which I thought my great experience had made me more capable of serving my Master better than before, his wisdom and justice have caused me to spend in grievous silence. And now my decays and disability of body are so much increased, that if I had leave, I have not strength, nor can ever reasonably expect it; therefore, once more I am glad to speak to you as I may, and shall be thankful, if authority will permit these instructions to come to your view, that the weak may have some more

(q) Works, vol. viii.

counsel and assistance. And if any shall miscarry, and disgrace religion, there may remain on record one more testimony, what doctrine it was that you were taught. The Lord be your teacher and your strength, and save you from yourselves, and from this present evil world, and preserve you to his heavenly kingdom, through Jesus Christ."[r]

He assigns another reason for its publication, beside that of its being the third part of his intended plan.

"The last sermon which I preached publicly, was at Blackfriars, on this text, Col. ii. 6, 7; and presently after there came forth a book called 'Farewell Sermons,' among which this of mine was one. Who did it, or to what end, I know not, nor doth it concern me to inquire. But I took it as an injury, both as it was done without my knowledge, and against my will, and to the offence of my superiors; and because it was taken by the notary so imperfectly, that much of it was nonsense: especially when some foreigners that lived in Poland, Hungary, and Helvetia, were earnest to buy this with the rest of my writings, I perceived how far the injury was likely to go, both against me and many others of my brethren. Therefore, finding since among the relics of my scattered papers, this imperfect piece, which I had before written on that text, I was desirous to publish it, as for the benefit of weak Christians, so to right myself, and to cashier that farewell sermon."[s]

The second part of this treatise came out the following year, under the title of 'The Character of a sound, confirmed Christian; as also of a weak Christian, and of a seeming Christian."[t] The preface to this is addressed to his friend, Henry Ashurst, Esq., and is dated from "his lodgings in New Prison, June 14, 1669." In reference to this work, he says, in his Life:

"The great weaknesses, passions, and injudiciousness, of many religious persons, and their ill effects; and especially perceiving that the temptations of the times, yea, the very reproofs of the Conformists did but increase these things among the separating party, caused me to offer a book to be licensed, called, 'Directions to weak Christians, how to grow in grace,' with a second part, being 'Sixty Characters of a sound Christian, with as many of the weak Christian, and the Hypocrite;' which I the rather writ to imprint on men's minds a right apprehension of Christianity, and to be as a confession of our judgment in this malignant age, when some Conformists would make the world believe that it is some monstrous thing, composed of folly and sedition, which the Nonconformists mean by a Christian and a godly man. This book came forth when I was in prison, having been long before refused by Mr. Grigg."[u]

(r) Works, vol. viii. p. 255. (s) Ibid. vol. viii. p. 258. (t) Ibid. vol. viii.
(u) Life, part iii. p. 61.

Of the reasons of this refusal by the bishop's chaplain, he gives the following account in another place. "This short treatise I offered to Mr. Thomas Grigg, the Bishop of London's chaplain, to be licensed for the press; a man who had but lately conformed, and who possessed special respect to me; but he utterly refused it, pretending that it savored of discontent, and would be interpreted as against the bishops and the times. The matter was, that in several passages I spoke of the prosperity of the wicked, and the adversity of the godly; described hypocrites by their enmity to the godly, and their forsaking the truth for fear of suffering; and described the godly by their undergoing the enmity of the wicked world, and being steadfast, whatever it shall cost them. All this was interpreted as against the Church or Prelatists. I asked them whether they would not license that of mine, which they would do of another man's, against whom they had no displeasure; and he told me, no; because the words would receive their interpretation with the mind of the author. He asked me whether I did not myself think that Nonconformists would interpret it as against the times. I answered him, yes; I thought they would: and so they do all those passages of Scripture, which speak of persecution, and the sufferings of the godly; but I hoped Bibles should be licensed for all that. I asked him whether that was the rule which they went by, that they would license nothing of mine, which they thought any readers would interpret as against the bishops or their party. And when he told me plainly, that it was their rule or resolution, I took it for my final answer, and purposed never to offer him more: for I despaired of writing that which men would not interpret according to their own condition and opinion; especially against those whose crimes are notorious before the world. This made me think what a troublesome thing is guilt, which, as Seneca saith, is like a sore, which is pained not only with a little touch, but sometimes upon a conceit that it is touched. It maketh a man think that every briar is a serjeant to arrest him; or, with Cain, that every one who seeth him will kill him. A Cainite's heart and life, have usually the attendance of a Cainite's conscience. I did but try the licenser with this small, inconsiderable script, that I might know what to expect for my more valued writings; I then told him that I had troubled the world with so much already, and said enough for one man's part, that I could not think it very necessary to say any more to them; and therefore I should accept of his discharge. But fain they would have had my controversial writings, about universal redemption, predetermination, &c., in which my judgment is more pleasing to them; but I was unwilling to publish them alone, while the practical writings are refused. I give God thanks that I once saw times of greater

liberty, though under an usurper; or else, as far as I can discern, scarce any of my books had ever seen the light." [x]

Having followed the order and connexion pointed out by Baxter himself, in his works relating to conversion and the unconverted, we must now depart from systematic arrangement to notice several important pieces which still belong to the same class of writing. I shall follow the order of time in which they appeared: 'The Mischiefs of self-ignorance, and the Benefits of self-acquaintance, opened in divers Sermons at St. Dunstan's, West.' 1661. 4to. [y] This volume is dedicated to Anne, Countess of Balcarras. Then follows an address to the people of Kidderminster, giving an account of the reasons why he was not allowed to preach in the diocese of Worcester, and which led to a controversy between him and Bishop Morley.

The subject of which he discourses, is one of great importance, and lies at the foundation of all proper knowledge and experience of the power of religion. It is founded on 1 Cor. xiii. 5, "Know ye not your own selves?" This treatise is probably less known to the reading public, than many of the practical works of Baxter, not because it is less valuable, but because it has not been regularly supplied in separate and successive editions. Its excellence consists not in doctrinally unfolding the economy of grace, or in directly pressing upon the reader the necessity of repentance towards God, or faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ, but in tracing out the involutions of that most intricate economy of thought and feeling, judgment and action, moral liking and moral antipathy, which exists entire, and works apart in the bosom of every individual: and in this way it is powerfully subservient to repentance and faith, by disturbing the apathy, and combating the ignorant indifference, which so fatally shut them out from men's consciences and hearts. Its general scheme of thought is instructively arranged; and although its topics are numerous, they are not diffusely treated; while under each of them, there is a rich variety of illustrative matter, judiciously selected, and very aptly introduced. It is idle to say more of the manner of the writing, than that it is the manner of Richard Baxter; showing the writer in every page, but clear, concise, and simple, beyond several of his other pieces; while it is second to none of them in persuasive eloquence and impressive fervor, clothing thoughts which are not familiar, in very conspicuous language, and adapting itself, with uncommon felicity, to the inexperienced and the undisciplined. The whole style and spirit of the work are exactly suited to the nature of the subject; and we think it well entitled to a place among the few books which the parent selects

(x) Life, part i. p. 123. (y) Works, vol. xvi.

for his child, or the pastor for the young of his flock, or the guardian for his pupil, as a means of awakening religious inquiry, and forming habits of early reflection. [z]

Of the Countess of Balcarras, to whom this work is dedicated, and her husband, of whose piety the author speaks in terms of warm commendation, the following account will interest the reader:

"She was daughter of the late Earl of Seaforth in Scotland, towards the Highlands, and was married to the Earl of Balcarras, a covenanter, but an enemy to Cromwell's perfidiousness, and true to the person and authority of the king. With the Earl of Glencarne, he kept up the last war for the king against Cromwell; and his lady, through dearness of affection, marched with him, and lay out of doors with him on the mountains. At last, Cromwell drove them out of Scotland, and they went together beyond sea to the king, whom they long followed. He was taken for the head of the Presbyterians with the king; but, by evil instruments, he fell out with the lord chancellor, who, prevailing against him upon some advantage, he was for a time forbidden the court; the grief whereof, added to the distempers he had contracted by his warfare on the cold and hungry mountains, cast him into a consumption, of which he died. He was a lord of excellent learning, judgment, and honesty; none being praised equally with him for learning and understanding in all Scotland.

"When the Earl of Lauderdale (his near kinsman and great friend) was prisoner in Portsmouth and Windsor Castle, he fell into acquaintance with my books, and so valued them, that he read them all, and took notes of them, and earnestly commended them to the Earl of Balcarras, then with the king. The Earl met, at the first sight, with some passages where he thought I spake too favorably of the Papists, and differed from many other Protestants; so he cast them by, and sent the reason of his distaste to the Earl of Lauderdale, who pressed him but to read one of the books over; which he did, and then read them all, (as I have seen many of them marked with his hand,) and was drawn to overvalue them more than the Earl of Lauderdale. Hereupon his lady reading them also, and being a woman of very strong love and friendship, with extraordinary entireness swallowed up in her husband's love, she, for the books' sake, and her husband's sake, became a most affectionate friend to me before she ever saw me. While she was in France, being zealous for the king's restoration, (in whose cause her

(z) A good edition of this work has recently been published by Collins, of Glasgow, among the 'Select Christian Authors,' with an admirable introduction by my excellent friend the Rev. David Young, of Perth, from which the preceding paragraph has been taken.

husband had pawned and ruined his estate,) by the Earl of Lauderdale's direction, she, with Sir Robert Murray, got divers letters from the pastors and others there to bear witness of the king's sincerity in the Protestant religion; among which there was one to me from Mr. Gaches. Her great wisdom, modesty, piety and sincerity, made her accounted the saint at court. When she came over with the king, her extraordinary respect obliged me to be so often with her, as gave me acquaintance with her eminency in all the foresaid virtues. She was of solid understanding for her sex; of prudence, much more than ordinary; of great integrity and constancy in her religion; a great hater of hypocrisy; and faithful to Christ in an unfaithful world. She was somewhat over affectionate to her friends, which hath cost her a great deal of sorrow in the loss of her husband, and since of other special friends; and may cost her more, when the rest forsake her, as many in prosperity do to those that will not forsake their fidelity to Christ. Her eldest son, the young Earl of Balcarras, a very hopeful youth, died of a strange disease; two stones being found in his heart, of which one was very great. Being my constant auditor, and over-respectful friend, I had occasion for the just praises and acknowledgements which I have given her; which the occasioning of these books hath caused me to mention."[a]

The death of Lord Balcarras took place on the 30th of August, 1659. His eldest son, referred to above, died in 1662.[b] In the margin of the passage of Baxter's life which I have extracted, Lady Balcarras is stated to have been afterwards married to the Earl of Argyle. Whether this note is Baxter's or Sylvester's, I am unable to say, nor can I vouch for its accuracy. She must in that case have been second wife to the unfortunate Argyle, who lost his life, as his father also had done, on a charge of high treason, at the Market Cross of Edinburgh, on the 30th of June, 1685.

In his letter to the inhabitants of Kidderminster, prefixed to this volume, Baxter gives a short account of the Savoy Conference, and hints that something he had said there, with which Dr. Morley, the bishop of Winchester, was exceedingly offended, was the cause of the bishop's refusing to allow him to preach again at Kidderminster, or anywhere in his diocese. "At the conclusion of this conference," he says, "those of the other part formed an argument, whose major proposition was to this sense: 'Whatsoever book enjoineth nothing but what is of itself lawful, and by lawful authority, enjoineth nothing that is sinful.' We denied this proposition, and at last gave divers reasons of our denial; among which, one was 'It may be unlawful by accident, and,

(a) Life, part i. p. 121. (b) 'Burke's Peerage,' p. 43.

therefore, sinful.' You know my crime, it is my concurring with learned, reverend brethren, to give this reason of our denial of a proposition : yet they are not forbidden to preach—only I."

The bishop took fire at this statement with one or two other allusions to himself, and published shortly after 'A Letter to a Friend, in vindication of himself from Mr Baxter's calumny.' In this letter, his lordship denies that Baxter ever had a right to be minister of Kidderminster ; accuses him of having robbed and injured the lawful vicar ; represents him to the people of Kidderminster as a very improper person to have the charge of them, and accuses him of holding various "maxims of treason, sedition, and rebellion, and as guilty of certain mis-statements." In proof of this, he introduces the testimony of Dr. Gunning and Dr. Pearson ; and concludes by making an appeal, "whether a man of this judgment and of these affections ought to be permitted to preach ?"

"When the bishop's invective was read," Baxter says, "many men were of many minds about the answering of it : those at a distance all cried out upon me to answer ; those at hand did all dissuade me, and told me that it would be imprisonment at least to me, if I did it with the greatest truth and mildness possible. Both gentlemen and all the city ministers told me, that it would not do half so much good as my suffering would do hurt ; that none believed it but the engaged party ; that to others an answer was not necessary, and would be unprofitable, for they would never read it. I thought that the judgment of men that were upon the place, and knew how things went, was most to be regarded. But yet I wrote a full answer to his book, except about the words in my 'Holy Commonwealth,' which were not to be spoken to, and kept it by me, that I might use it as there was occasion. At that time, Mr. Joseph Glanvil sent me the offer of his service, to write in my defence, but I dissuaded him from bringing himself into suffering, and making himself unserviceable, for so low an end : only I gave him, and no man else, my own answer to peruse, which he returned with his approbation of it.

"But Mr. Edward Bagshaw (son to Mr. Bagshaw, the lawyer, that wrote 'Mr. Bolton's Life') without my knowledge wrote a book in answer to the bishop's. I could have wished he had let it alone ; for the man hath no great disputing faculty, but only a florid, epistolary style, and was wholly a stranger to me and to the matters of fact, and, therefore, could say nothing to them : but only being of a bold and Roman spirit, he thought that no suffering should deter a man from the smallest duty, or cause him to silence any useful truth. And I had formerly seen a

Latin discourse of his against monarchy, which no whit pleased me, being a weak argumentation for a bad cause."[c]

Glanvil's letters, offering to write in Baxter's defence against Dr. Morely, still remain. They are full of commendation of Baxter's character, and of the success with which he had met the bishop's charges. "Methinks," he says, "'tis a great pity but the world should be disabused, and that your right reverend libeller should be made ashamed, of his misreports and slanderous falsifications." He advises Baxter, by all means to publish, as, till his defence appeared, "the reverend father's lies will be taken for irreproveable truths."[d] This language is abundantly plain from a son of the church towards one of her reverend prelates; and it is certainly more illustrative of his attachment to Baxter, than of his respect for the episcopal hierarchy.

Though Baxter suppressed his answer to the bishop's letter, he took notice of it in the epistolary preface to his 'True and Only Way of Concord,' published in 1680, which he addressed to Bishops Morely and Gunning, whom he considered the chief instruments in defeating the design of the Savoy Conference. In some other of his controversial pieces, Baxter also alludes to the bishop's conduct.

That the bishop felt an impression had been made against him by Baxter's publications, is very evident; for at the distance of twenty years from the original discussion, when in the eighty-fifth year of his age, he published a quarto volume of more than five hundred pages, 'The Bishop of Winchester's Vindication of himself from divers false, scandalous, and injurious Reflections, made upon him by Mr. Richard Baxter, in several of his writings.' 1683. In this large volume, the bishop reprints the 'Letter to a Friend,' already noticed, and then in his Vindication, proceeds to support his charges against Baxter, the propriety of his conduct in silencing him, and of his own behaviour at the Savoy Conference. The whole is mixed up with the bishop's political and high-church sentiments, which were as little in accordance with the principles of the British constitution, as with the spirit of the New Testament. Baxter wrote no formal answer to this work; but in reference to it, he says: "Bishop Morley was accounted one of the most eminent of the clergy, for parts and orthodoxy. One book against me, called his Letter, is most shameless for untruths in public matters of fact. His last and greatest is to prove against me, that the parliament hath no part in legislative power, nor the whole kingdom any right of self-defence against any commissioned by the king on any pretence whatsoever. This accuser is an eminent member of the best church in the world. Is this bundle of gross untruths

(c) Life, part ii. p. 378. (d) Baxter MSS.

a proof that he is one of the best men in the world? He saith that 'the good that I wrote was for mischievous ends.' But what should move a man, in pain and expectation of speedy death, to write above six score books, great and small, that are contrary to the bent of his own heart? And, for that which he would mischievously overthrow to spend his life against his own affections?" [e]

Having finished this digression on the controversy with Bishop Morley, we return to the class of books which is the proper subject of this chapter.

The next work which flowed from the pen of our untiring writer, in this class, bears a very singular and perhaps objectionable title, 'A SAINT or a BRUTE. The certain necessity and excellency of holiness, so plainly proved, and urgently applied, as by the blessing of God may convince and save the miserable, impenitent, ungodly sensualists, if they will not let the devil hinder them from a sober and serious reading.' 1662. 4to. [f]

From the dedication to his flock at Kidderminster, and his late hearers in London, I cannot avoid quoting a paragraph or two, beautifully written:

"Once more, through the great mercy of God, I have liberty to send you a preacher for your private families, which may speak to you when I cannot, and when I lie silent in the dust. I take it for no small mercy, that I have been so much employed about the great and necessary things, in despite of all the malice of Satan, who would have entangled me, and taken up my time in personal vindications and barren controversies.

"I was also, when I first intended writing, under another temptation: being of their mind who thought that nothing should be made public but what a man had first laid out his most choice art upon, I thought to have acquainted the world with nothing but what was the work of time and diligence; but my conscience soon told me that there was too much of pride and selfishness in this, and that humility and self-denial required me to lay by the affectation of that style, and spare that industry which tended but to advance my name with men, when it hindered the main work, and crossed my end. Providence, draw-

(e) 'Penitent Confession,' p. 65. The controversy between Morley and Baxter appears to have been taken up very hotly by several persons on both sides. It occasioned—Hypocrisy Unveiled, in a Letter to Mr. Baxter, 1662—A Letter to a Person of Honor, containing some Animadversions on the Bishop of Worcester's Letter to Mr. Baxter, 1662—A Second Letter on the same subject, 1662—A Letter, with some Animadversions on the Animadverter on the Bishop of Worcester's Letter, by J. C., M. D. 1662—D. E. Defeated; or, a Reply to a late scurrilous Pamphlet against the Bishop of Worcester's Letter, 1662—Reflections upon the Animadversions upon the Bishop of Worcester's Letter, by H. G. 1662—Vindication of the Bishop of Worcester's Letter touching Mr. Baxter, from the Animadversions of D. E. 1662. Behold how great a fire a little matter kindleth!

(f) Works, vol. x.

ing forth some popular unpolished discourses, and giving them success beyond my expectation, did thereby rebuke my selfish thoughts, and satisfy me that the truths of God do perform their work more by their divine authority, and proper evidence, and material excellency, than by any ornaments of fleshly wisdom. And, as Seneca saith, though I will not despise an eloquent physician, yet will I not think myself much the happier for his adding eloquence to his healing art. Being encouraged, then, by reason and experience, I venture these popular sermons into the world, and especially for the use of you, my late auditors, that heard them. I bless God that when more worthy laborers are fain to weep over their obstinate, unprofitable, unthankful people, and some are driven away by their injuries, and put to shake off the dust of their feet against them; I am rather forced to weep over my own unthankful heart, that did not sufficiently value the mercy of a faithful flock, who parted with me rather as the Ephesians with Paul, and who have lived according to the plain and necessary doctrine which they had received. Among whom, Papists, who persuade men that our doctrine tendeth to divisions, can find no divisions or sects; who have constantly disowned both the ambitious usurpations which have shaken the kingdom, and the factions, censoriousness, and civil violence in the church, which pride hath generated and nourished in this trying age. Among whom, I have enjoyed so very large a proportion of mercy, in the liberty of so long an exercise of my ministry, with so universal advantage and success, that I must be disingenuously unthankful if I should murmur and repine at the present restraining hand of God. But I must say with David; 'If I shall find favor in the eyes of the Lord, he will bring me again, and show me the ark and habitation.' There, or elsewhere, use me in his service. But if he say, 'I have no delight in thee; behold, here am I, let him do to me as it seemeth good unto him.'" [g]

It was not the pleasure of God that Baxter should resume his labors in the place which occupied so much of his heart and of his thoughts. Painful as he felt this trial to be, he learned to submit to it in quietness and patience, and no doubt found that it was among the things which worked together for his good.

The most objectionable part of this work is its title, which presents a more offensive aspect to the reader than is desirable, or than the nature of the subject warrants. The great object of it is to convince men "that holiness is the most pleasant way; that the godly choose the better part, and that the ungodly sensualists live as brutes, while they unreasonably refuse to live as

(g) Works, vol. x. pp. 3—5.

saints." The treatise is founded on Luke xi. 41, 42, and, like many other of his practical writings, is the substance of the discourses which he delivered from the pulpit. Part of it relates to the deistical controversy, and is recommended by himself to be read in connexion with the second part of his 'Saint's Rest,' and the 'Treatise against Infidelity.' Many of his statements are strong and pointed, and though the argument is maintained in a very discursive manner, it is prosecuted with his characteristic ability.

The other and smaller performances in this class I shall group together, as none of them require a distinct notice. The titles in general, sufficiently explain their nature and design. They were all the substance of sermons preached in different places, though published rather in the form of tracts, or treatises, than sermons.

'Making Light of Christ and Salvation,' preached at St. Lawrence Jewry, London. [h] 'The One Thing Necessary; or, Christ's Justification of Mary's Choice.' 1684. [i] 'Cain and Abel Malignity; or, Enmity to serious Godliness, lamented, described, detected,' &c. 1689. [k] This treatise is partly designed to expose the evil of enmity to serious godliness, as the root of all persecution. Preface to Alleine's 'Alarm.' 'A Sermon of Judgment,' preached at St. Paul's, before the lord mayor and aldermen of London, Dec. 1654. [l] 'Redemption of Time.' [m]

Baxter mentions some circumstances respecting two of these sermons, which illustrate his popularity as a preacher, and are therefore worth the recording. "When I returned home, I was solicited by letters to print many of the sermons which I had preached in London; and in some of them I gratified their desires. One sermon which I published, was against men's making light of Christ, upon Matt. xxii. 5. This sermon was preached at St. Lawrence Jewry, where Mr. Vines was pastor; where, though I sent the day before to secure room for the Lord Broghill and the Earl of Suffolk, with whom I was to go in the coach; yet when I came, the crowd had so little respect to persons, that they were fain to go home again, because they would not come within hearing. The old Earl of Warwick, who stood in the lobby, brought me home again; and Mr. Vines himself was fain to get up into the pulpit and sit behind me, and I stood between his legs; which I mention that the reader may understand that verse in my poem concerning him, which is printed, where I say that,

'At once one pulpit held us both.'

"Another of those sermons which I published, was a sermon of judgment, which I enlarged into a small treatise. This was

(h) Works, vol. xvi. (i) Ibid. vol. x. (k) Ibid. (l) Ibid. (m) Ibid.

preached at St. Paul's at the desire of Sir Christopher Pack, then lord mayor, to the greatest auditory that ever I saw."

It is impossible to survey the class of writings which we have thus briefly brought under review, without admiring the goodness and wisdom of God, in raising up a man capable of producing them. With all the imperfections belonging to them as human performances, written often in haste, and amidst the distractions of a period of great affliction and agitation, where shall we find, in the wide range of human literature, so large a portion of powerful and heart-stirring appeal? They comprise deeply interesting and comprehensive views of the guilt and misery of man, and the divine provision of mercy through a Saviour; of the awful punishment which awaits the wicked, and of the immortal blessedness provided for the righteous. These topics are interwoven, in general, with great address, with every thing that is tender in entreaty, solemn in warning, and faithful in reproof and expostulation. Baxter appeals not to the passions only, but to the judgment. His aim is to convince the understanding, as well as to subdue the heart. He calculated on no impressions being lasting or useful, but those which were produced by enlightened views of truth and error, holiness and sin, time and eternity. He dealt not in noisy and vapid declamation, but in sound and persuasive argument. He felt the goodness of his cause, and the weight of the reasons which he could adduce in its support, and with a giant's strength, and an angel's earnestness, he urged the subject home on every man's bosom and business.

It will probably be remarked, that in these discourses there is a larger portion of the Law than of the Gospel; and that they are more calculated to operate on the fears than on the hopes of men. While I admit this to be true, I doubt whether it ought to be regarded as a fault. The object of the author is to awaken and convince; he therefore went, what he considered to be, the straightforward road to it. He did not conceal the promises of the Gospel, but they did not constitute the chief topics of his preaching to men whom he wished to rouse. Judging by the success attending his labors, which arose, there is reason to believe, from the great plainness and fidelity with which he warned men, instead of censuring, it would be well to imitate the style of his preaching.

He was never afraid of carrying the warmth and energy of his appeals too far. He often complains of his own coldness, but never of the excess of his zeal. The charge of fanaticism gave him no concern. Knowing the terrors of the Lord, he cared nothing for the displeasure or the frown of men, but made it

(n) Life, part i. pp. 111. 112.

his grand concern to be found faithful. To win souls was his object; the gaining of them was his reward. Nor did he lose his aim. If few men have labored harder, or under greater bodily suffering, or more severe reproach, few, indeed, have enjoyed a richer reward. In the many fruits of his labors, he could exult, even while on earth; they now constitute his crown of rejoicing in heaven.

CHAPTER IV.

WORKS ON CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE.

Introductory Remarks—'Right Method for settled Peace of Conscience'—Colonel Bridges—'The Crucifying of the World'—Thomas Foley, Esq.—'Treatise on Self-Denial'—'Obedient Patience'—'Life of Faith'—'Knowledge and Love compared'—Sir Henry and Lady Diana Ashurst—'God's Goodness Vindicated'—Various Discourses—'Cure of Melancholy'—Baxter's Experience among Persons thus afflicted—Conclusion.

If the works noticed in the preceding chapter show how admirably qualified Baxter was for dealing with the unconverted, and how powerfully and successfully he directed his energies to benefit them, the present chapter will bring before the reader a class of books which equally illustrates his capacity for instructing and edifying Christians, and shows that this branch of the Christian ministry was cultivated by him no less than the former.

When a sinner has been converted from the error of his ways, only the first step has been taken towards the kingdom of heaven. His knowledge probably extends but to the merest elements of religion; or to those first truths, which as they are the simplest, so are they the most powerfully calculated to interest the understanding, and engage the affections. His perceptions of the extent of his wretchedness and danger, and of the divine suitableness of Heaven's plan of recovery, comprehend, perhaps, all that is true, and yet embrace but a narrow range. As he becomes familiar with these, he perceives their connexion with other subjects, more difficult and complex. His mind requires fresh excitement to counteract its natural bias, to prevent its return to former pursuits and habits, and to carry it on in the new course into which it has been led.

But new discoveries of truth, and of the way of righteousness, are not the only discoveries which a man comes to make in the progress of Christianity. He makes discoveries of the depravity and deceitfulness of his heart, for which he was not at first, perhaps, at all prepared; which astound and perplex him, lead him to question his own sincerity, the reality of the change which he supposes had taken place in his mind; and thus brings him into deep distress. His conscience is wounded, his spirits

are depressed, and his confidence in the adaptation of the Gospel remedy, or in his right to use it, is very considerably abated.

Much skill is required in the treatment of persons in this state. Severity or tenderness, when unduly or improperly exercised, may be almost equally injurious. The one may create despondency and desperation; the other may soothe and quiet a wound without healing it. In some cases it is necessary to apply a sedative, in others a stimulus. The sensibility of some is quicker than their understandings; the judgment of such must be informed. In other cases the mind is sufficiently enlightened, but the conscience is not properly under its guidance; the moral faculties of such must be the chief object of attention. Some instructers, like quacks in medicine, have a spiritual panacea for every case. This they apply without judgment or discrimination, healing some, and killing others; but in both the professions, while the cures are magnified and blazoned, we hear as little as possible of the deaths which are inflicted.

Christianity is perfectly adapted to all the diversified forms of evil which can or do occur among men. If it were not, it would not be what the Scriptures represent it—the fruit of Jehovah's highest wisdom, the profoundest display of his goodness to creatures; and therefore worthy of the reception of every human being to whom it is addressed. Hence the great business of the Christian ministry, in relation to believers, is, to unfold the various parts of this infinitely wise and beneficent scheme; to obviate the difficulties arising from their imperfect acquaintance with it; to illustrate the relative connexion and harmony of its various principles, and the holy tendency and design of all its provisions and enactments.

By many ill-informed persons, who make a profession of religion, a kind of nausea is felt, when the subject of Christian experience is mentioned. It is instantly regarded as the cant of a party, or as something akin to fanaticism. At all events it is set down as what belongs only to the weaker portion of the religious community, or is charitably ascribed to an oversensitive conscience, or the undue cultivation of a spirituality which is not adapted to present circumstances. The subject is therefore discarded, as unworthy of attention from men of more enlarged and cultivated minds.

It is readily granted that the subject has been abused; that a phraseology has been employed in treating it both disgusting and absurd; that it has been substituted in the place of the higher morals of religion, and treated as if it were compatible with outward carelessness and even gross misconduct. Still it would be as foolish to deny the existence of what is commonly called christian experience, as to deny that individuals who are under a process of cure or healing, have any consciousness

of the effects which are produced by the medicines that are prescribed to them. If the Gospel is destined and fitted to act as a remedy, there must be a sensible experience to correspond with it. There must be a consciousness of the effects, if the truth has exerted a searching power on the conscience, a healing influence on the heart, and a transforming operation on the whole character. If it has infused a new principle of life into the soul, giving a new tone and direction to its thoughts and pursuits, and surrounding it by a healthier and holier atmosphere than it ever before breathed, there must be some knowledge of all this. As the process of divine influence advances or retrogrades; as it experiences checks from within, or counteractions from without; as there is a vigorous and persevering co-operation on our part with God's revealed purposes and plans, or a state of inactivity or positive resistance, so will the work of salvation be advancing or receding. Now all this makes up what we understand by religious experience, or the Christian life, to cultivate which both the ministry and writings of Baxter were devoted.

The first work on this subject which he published is, his 'Right Method for Settled Peace of Conscience and Spiritual Comfort.'[o] 1653. 12mo. This was the fourth of Baxter's publications, and was occasioned, chiefly, by the lady of Colonel John Bridges, for whose benefit, in the first instance, it was composed and printed. He accordingly dedicates it to Colonel and Mrs. Bridges, and to Mr. and Mrs. Foley, all of whom were persons in opulent circumstances, who belonged to his congregation at Kidderminster. "Though one only," he says, "had the original interest in these papers, I now direct them to you all, as not knowing how, in this, to separate you. You dwell together in my estimation and affection: one of you a member of the church which I must teach, and, legally, the patron of its maintenance and minister; the other, a special branch of that family, to which I was first indebted in this county. You lately joined in presenting to the parliament the petition of this county for the Gospel and a faithful ministry. When I only told you of my intention of sending some poor scholars to the University, you freely and jointly offered your considerable annual allowance thereto, and that for the continuance of my life, or their necessities there. I will tell the world of this, whether you will or not; not for your applause, but for their imitation, and the shame of many who will not be drawn to do the like."[p]

Colonel Bridges, then patron of the parish of Kidderminster, was the long and tried friend of Baxter, and one who made a considerable figure during the Commonwealth. He had the command of a regiment in Ireland immediately before the

(o) Works, vol. ix. (p) Epistle Dedicatory, Works, vol. ix.

Restoration, and, by a dexterous manœuvre, got possession of Dublin Castle, without bloodshed; of which he published a short narrative. "Had it not been for that action," says Baxter, "it is probable that Ireland would have been the refuge and rendezvous for the disbanded fugitive army, and that there they would not only have maintained the war, but have embodied against England, and come over again, with resolutions heightened by their warnings. The reward that Colonel Bridges had for this service was the peaceful testimony of his conscience, and a narrow escape from being utterly ruined; being sued in an action of fourscore thousand pound; as one that, after Edghill fight, had taken the king's goods, which was proved false, and he, being cleared by the court, did quickly after die of a fever, at Chester and go to a more peaceable and desirable world."[q]

"Mrs. Bridges," Baxter informs us, "was often weeping out her doubts to him, about her long and great uncertainty of her true sanctification and salvation. He told her that a few hasty words were not direction enough for the satisfactory resolving of so great a case; and that he would, therefore, lay her down a few of those necessary directions, which she should read and study, and get well imprinted on her mind." When he had begun it, he found he could not make it so brief as he had expected, and judging that it might be useful to others as well as to the lady who occasioned it, he enlarged it, to meet other cases beside hers.[r]

The small tract, originally designed to be but "one sheet of paper," thus swelled out into a little volume, containing "Thirty-two Directions" for the attainment or the preservation of the important blessing—peace of mind. The Puritans and Nonconformists may be said to have excelled in the class of books to which this work belongs. Sibbs's 'Bruised Reed, and Soul's Conflict;' Symond's 'Deserted Soul's Case and Cure;' the works of Preston, Perkins, Ball, and Culverwell, on similar topics, were all prior to this of Baxter's; but cannot be regarded as superseding it. It is better written than most of its predecessors of the same class, and is, on the whole, well calculated to answer the purpose for which it was intended. The directions are, indeed, sufficiently numerous, and some of them quite as much calculated to entangle and perplex as to assist. He found, he informs us, respecting it,

"This book pleased Dr. Hammond well, and many rational persons, and some of those for whom it was written; but the women and weaker sort, I found, could not so well improve clear reason as they can a few comfortable, warm, and pretty sentences. It is style, and not reason, which doth most with them. Some of the divines were angry with it, for a passage or

(q) Life, part i. p. 106. (r) Ibid. p. 109.

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two about perseverance; because I had said that many men are certain of their present sanctification, who are not certain of their perseverance and salvation, meaning all the godly that are assured of their sanctification, and yet do not hold the certainty of perseverance. But a great storm of jealousy and censure was, by this, and some such words, raised against me by many good men, who lay more on their opinions and party than they ought; therefore, as some would have had me to retract it, and others to leave it out of the next impression, I did the latter." [s]

From a Dedication to the Poor in Spirit, which is prefixed to this work, I extract an admirably descriptive passage of the Antinomians of that period. It is equally applicable still. "One thing more, I confess, did much prevail with me to make these papers public, and that is, the Antinomians' common, confident obtrusion of their anti-evangelical doctrines and methods for comforting troubled souls. They are the most notorious mountebanks in this art, the highest pretenders, and most unhappy performers, that most of the reformed churches ever knew. And none, usually, are more ready to receive their doctrines than such weak women or unskilful people, that, being in trouble, are like a sick man in great pain, who is glad to hear what all can say, and to make trial of every thing by which he hath any hope of ease. Then there is so much opium in these mountebanks' nepenthes, or antidote of rest; so many principles of carnal security and presumption, which tend to the present ease of the patient, whatever follows, that it is no wonder if some well-meaning Christians do quickly swallow the bait, and proclaim the rare effects of this medicament, and the admirable skill of this unskilful sect, to the ensnaring of others, especially that are in the like distress." [t]

In 1658, he published 'The Crucifying of the World by the Cross of Christ,' [u] a treatise in quarto, the substance of which had originally been delivered as an assize sermon, which was preached at Worcester, when Thomas Foley, Esq., was high sheriff of the county. To that gentleman it is accordingly dedicated. He was a man of distinguished piety and benevolence, and the devoted friend of Baxter. From very moderate circumstances, his father, Richard Foley, and he, rose, by means of iron works in the county of Worcester, to the possession of an estate of five thousand pounds per annum—an immense sum in those days. He necessarily acquired the patronage of several livings on his extensive property, to which he invariably presented worthy and useful ministers. Kidderminster fell into his hands after Baxter had left it, having been purchased from Colonel Bridges, and to which he would gladly have present-

(s) Life, part i. pp. 109, 110. (t) Works, vol. ix. p. 61. (u) Works, vol. ix.

ed Baxter, had he been capable of accepting it. Baxter's 'Dedication' is commendatory, but faithful. It is worthy of the grateful friend, but not less of the conscientious servant of Christ. Richard Foley, the founder of the family, and the early patron of Baxter, died in 1657. He endowed a school at Stourbridge, with five hundred pounds per annum. His great grandson was raised to the peerage by Queen Anne, in 1711, by the title of Baron Foley of Kidderminster, from whom the present noble family of that name has descended. [v] After the dedication is a long preface 'To the Nobility, Gentry, and all that have the riches of this World,' in which Baxter addresses them with great fidelity respecting their easily-besetting sins, warns them of the danger of trusting in their external advantages, and endeavors to excite them to the performance of good works. [x]

The discourse itself, which is founded on Gal. vi. 14, brings the grand subject of Christianity, with its inseparable, practical influence, powerfully before the reader. While it preserves the style of address throughout, it is much more of a treatise than a sermon, having been greatly enlarged, in every part, after its delivery. He first discusses, negatively, what it is not, and then, positively, what it is to have the world crucified to us, and to be crucified to the world. He next shows how this is effected by the cross of Christ. He then assigns various reasons, to show that this is so, and why it must be so. In conclusion, he applies the first part of the doctrine of the text, by showing that, for the reasons assigned, believers must glory in the cross of Christ, abhorring the glorying of worldly men.

While the doctrine of salvation, through the sacrifice of Christ, is clearly enough stated in the discourse, it is not the prominent or leading topic of it. In this respect, it differs widely from the celebrated sermon of Maclaurin, on the same text and subject. In that beautiful production, the work of the Redeemer on the cross, is set forth as the highest manifestation of the love and wisdom of God, with a power of illustration and felicity of expression which have never been exceeded. In the discourse of Baxter, the effect of this doctrine in withdrawing men from the love and enjoyment of the world, and in fixing the heart on the sublimer and holier enjoyments of religion, are the grand topics; and they are treated with the hand of a master. All the empty glare and noisome pollution of the world were known to Baxter. Into the dark chambers of

(v) Burke's 'Peerage.' art. Foley.

(x) Among his other recommendations is one to landlords, "to engage their tenants in their leases to learn a catechism, and read the Scriptures, and be once a year accountable to their minister for their profiting." His recommendations about the distribution of religious books and tracts, and visiting the poor and the sick, were more likely to be attended to.

the human heart he pours the light of day, exhibiting all its guiltiness and pollution, and exposing the inadequacy of all that the world can supply to satisfy its "immortal longings."

How admirably does he expose the vain show of man's bustling life? "It is but like children's games, where all is done in jest, and which wise men account not worthy their observance. It is but like the acting of a comedy, where great persons and actions are personated and counterfeited; and a pompous stir there is for a while, to please the foolish spectators, that themselves may be pleased by their applause, and then they come down, and the sport is ended, and they are as they were. It is but like a puppet play, where there is great doings to little purpose; or like the busy gadding of the laborious ants, to gather together a little sticks and straw, which the spurn of man's foot will soon disperse."

With what beauty does he describe the emptiness of the world; and with what earnestness does he expostulate with men on the folly of preferring it to the better enjoyments of God! "What? shall we prefer a mole-hill before a kingdom? A shadow before the substance? An hour before eternity? Nothing before all things? Vanity and vexation before felicity? —The cross of Christ hath set up such a sun as quite darkeneth the light of worldly glory. Though earth were something, if there were no better to be had, it is nothing when heaven standeth by."

I know none of the writings of Baxter which contains passages of greater power, or more impressive eloquence, than this. The solemnity of the circumstances in which the discourse was delivered, appears to have affected him, and increased even his accustomed earnestness. I cannot make many quotations, but let the reader imagine, if he can, the effect of the following passage, addressed to the court:

"Honorable, worshipful, and all well-beloved, it is a weighty employment that occasioneth your meeting here to-day. The estates and lives of men are in your hands. But it is another kind of judgment which you are all hastening towards: when judges and juries, the accusers and accused, must all appear upon equal terms, for the final decision of a far greater cause. The case that is then and there to be determined, is not whether you shall have lands or no lands, life or no life (in our natural sense;) but whether you shall have heaven or hell, salvation or damnation, an endless life of glory with God and the Redeemer, and the angels of heaven, or an endless life of torment with devils and ungodly men. As sure as you now sit on those seats, you shall shortly all appear before the Judge of all the world, and there receive an irreversible sentence, to an unchangeable state of happiness or misery. This is the great business that

should presently call up your most serious thoughts, and set all the powers of your souls on work for the most effectual preparation; that if you are men, you may quit yourselves like men, for the preventing of that dreadful doom which unprepared souls must there expect. The greatest of your secular affairs are but dreams and toys to this. Were you at every assize to determine causes of no lower value than the crowns and kingdoms of the monarchs of the earth, it were but as children's games to this. If any man of you believe not this, he is worse than the devil that tempteth him to unbelief; and let him know that unbelief is no prevention, nor will put off the day, or hinder his appearance; but ascertain his condemnation at that appearance.

"He that knows the law and the fact, may know before your assize, what will become of every prisoner, if the proceedings be all just, as in our case they will certainly be. Christ will judge according to his laws; know therefore whom the law condemneth or justifieth, and you may know whom Christ will condemn or justify. And seeing all this is so, doth it not concern us all to make a speedy trial of ourselves in preparation to this final trial? I shall for your own sakes therefore, take the boldness, as the officer of Christ, to summon you to appear before yourselves, and keep an assize this day in your own souls, and answer at the bar of conscience, to what shall be charged upon you. Fear not the trial; for it is not conclusive, final, or a peremptory irreversible sentence that must now pass. Yet slight it not; for it is a necessary preparative to that which is final and irreversible. Consequentially, it may prove a justifying accusation, and absolving condemnation, and if you proceed to execution, a saving, quickening death, which I am now persuading you to undergo. The whole world is divided into two sorts of men: one that love God above all, and live for him; and the other that love the flesh and world above all, and live to them. One that seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness; another that seek first the things of this life. One that mind and savor the things of the flesh and of man; the other that mind and savor most the things of the Spirit and of God. One that account all things dung and dross that they may win Christ; another that make light of Christ in comparison of their business, and riches, and pleasures in the world. One that live by sight and sense upon present things; another that live by faith upon things invisible. One that have their conversation in heaven, and live as strangers upon earth; another that mind earthly things, and are strangers to heaven. One that have in resolution forsaken all for Christ, and the hopes of a treasure in heaven; another that resolve to keep somewhat here, though they venture and forsake the heavenly reward, and will go away sorrowful that they cannot have both. One that being born of the

flesh is but flesh; the other that being born of the Spirit is spirit. One that live as without God in the world; the other that live as without the seducing world in God, and in and by the subservient world to God. One that have ordinances and means of grace, as if they had none; the other that have houses, lands, wives, as if they had none. One that believe as if they believed not, and love God as if they loved him not, and pray as if they prayed not, as if the fruit of these were but a shadow; the other that weep, as if they wept not, for worldly things, and rejoice as if they rejoiced not. One that have Christ as not possessing him, and use him and his name as but abusing them; the other that buy as if they possessed not, and use the world as not abusing it. One that draw near to God with their lips, when their hearts are far from him; the other that corporally converse with the world, when their hearts are far from it. One that serve God who is a Spirit, with carnal service, and not in spirit and truth; the other that use the world itself spiritually, and not in a carnal worldly manner. In a word, one sort are children of this world; the other are the children of the world to come, and heirs of the heavenly kingdom. One sort have their portion in this life; and the other have God for their portion. One sort have their good things in this life-time, and their reward here; the other have their evil things in this life, and live in hope of the everlasting reward."[y]

The next work that occurs in this class, is his 'Treatise on Self-Denial,' which was first published in 1659. "Being greatly apprehensive," he says, "of the commonness and danger of the sin of selfishness, as the sum and root of all positive evil, I preached many sermons against it, and, at the request of some friends, I published them in this treatise, which found better acceptance than most of my other books, but yet prevented not the ruin of church and state, and millions of souls, by that sin."[z]

To understand the allusion in this sentence, the reader must remember that the work was published shortly before the Restoration. Prefixed to it, is a long letter addressed to Colonel James Berry, one of the council of state. Of Berry, we have had occasion to speak in a former part of this work. He was one of the earliest friends of Baxter, in whose religious character he had placed great confidence; but, of whom, he afterwards greatly altered his opinion. Whether he was justified in altering his opinion of Berry, belongs not to our present subject; but in this letter there is some admirable admonitions on the danger of worldly greatness, by which Baxter was afraid the colonel had been injured.

(y) Works, vol. ix. pp. 431—433. (z) Life, part i. p. 117.

"Self is the strongest and most dangerous enemy that ever you fought against. It is a whole army united; and the more dangerous, because so near. Many that have fought as valiantly and successfully against other enemies as you, have, at last, been conquered and undone by self. Conquer it you cannot, without a conflict; and the conflict must endure as long as you live. Combating is not pleasing to the enemy; and, therefore, as long as self is the enemy, and self-pleasing is natural to corrupted man, (that should be wholly addicted to please the Lord,) self-denial will prove a difficult task; and if somewhat in the advice that would engage you deeper in the conflict should seem bitter or ungrateful, I should not wonder. And let me freely tell you, that your prosperity and advancement will make the work so exceedingly difficult, that, since you have been a major-general and a lord, and now a counsellor of state, you have stood in a more slippery, perilous place, and have need of much more grace and vigilance than when you were but Baxter's friend.

"I sleep most sweetly when I have travelled in the cold. Frost and snow are friends to the seed, though they are enemies to the flower. Adversity, indeed, is contrary to glory; but it befriendeth grace. Plutarch tells us, that, when Cæsar passed by a smoky, nasty village at the foot of the Alps, some of his commanders merely asked him whether there was such a stir for commands, and dignities, and honors, among those cottages, as there was at Rome. The answer is easy. Do you not think that an Anthony, a Mark, a Jerome, or such other of the ancient, retired Christians, were wiser and happier men than a Nero or a Caligula; yea, or a Julius Cæsar? Is it a desirable thing to be a Lord, or ruler, before we turn to common earth; and, as Marius, that was made emperor one day, reigned the next, and was slain by a soldier the next; so to be worshipped to-day, and laid in the dust, if not in hell, to-morrow? It was the saying of the emperor Severus, 'Omnia fui, sed nihil expedit;' and of King David, 'I have seen an end of all perfection.' O, value these things but as they deserve? Speak impartially; are not those that are striving to get up the ladder, foolish and ridiculous, when those that are at the top have attained but danger, trouble, and envy; and those that fall down are accounted miserable?

'——— Sed nulla aconita bibuntur
Fictilibus ———.'" a

Referring to their early intimacy, he mentions, with gratitude, that Berry had been the instrument of introducing him into the ministry. 'You brought me into the ministry. I am con-

(a) Works, vol. xi. p. 16.

fident you know to what ends, and with what intentions, I desired it. I was then very ignorant, young, and raw; though my weakness be yet such as I must lament, I must say, to the praise of the great Shepherd of the flock, that he hath, since then, offered me precious opportunities, much assistance, and as much encouragement as to any man that I know alive. You know my education and initial weakness were such as forbid me to glory in the flesh: but I will not rob God of his glory to avoid the appearance of ostentation, lest I be proud of seeming not to be proud. I doubt not but many thousand souls will thank you when they have read, that you were the man that led me into the ministry: and shall I entertain a suspicion that you will ever hearken to those men that would rob you of the reward of many such works, and engage you against the King of Saints?" [b]

He concludes his letter with inimitable beauty: "But I have been too tedious. I beseech you interpret not any of these words as intended for accusation or unjust suspicion of yourself. God forbid you should ever fall from that integrity that I am persuaded you once had. But my eye is on the times with grief, and on my ancient, dearest friend with love: and, in an age of iniquity and temptation, my conscience and the world shall never say that I was unfaithful to my friend, and forbore to tell him of the common dangers." [c]

The treatise is of considerable extent, occupying the greater part of one of the volumes of the new edition of his works. He divides it into seventy-three chapters, embracing a vast range of topics, more or less connected with his main subject. He discusses almost every thing that may engage or ensnare the mind; in regard to which, therefore, Christians must be on their guard. The inveterate and extensive power of the principle of selfishness, with its diversified modes of operation, has never perhaps been more strikingly exhibited than in this treatise. SELF is truly and correctly described as the great idol which all unsanctified men worship. It is that for which the rich and the ambitious struggle; for which the merchant compasseth sea and land; for which the soldier fights, the tradesman deals, the ploughman labors, the traveller goes forth. It is the ruling principle in the world, and the source of all ambition, contention, and love of pre-eminence, in the church.

In dissecting and illustrating its nature, Baxter is not always strictly accurate; but he is sufficiently so for all the purposes of popular and practical writing. Many things to which he adverts, belong, perhaps, as properly to some of the other evil

(b) Works, pp. 23, 24. (c) Ibid. pp. 25, 26.

principles of our nature as to the love of self. It is, however, one of the great roots of that many-branching tree, which bears no fruit that is good or profitable. What Bernard, as quoted by Baxter, says of pride or ambition, may, with great propriety, be applied to this: "Subtile malum secretum virus, pestis occulta, doli artifex, mater hypocrisis, livoris parens, vitiorum origo, tinea sanctitatis, excæcatrix cordiun, ex remediis morbos creans, ex medicina languorem generans." Such a root of evil, the Gospel, aided by the omnipotence of divine influence, alone can extirpate from the heart of man.

In this able treatise, there are various indications that the spirit of the author was, at the time, discomposed and fretted. Many things in the state of the times displeased him: the conduct of the ruling powers, the multiplication of sects, the swarming of errors, the want of uniformity among professors of the Gospel, and, of that subordination which Baxter believed to be necessary to a healthy state of religion, with the personal treatment which he sometimes experienced, all tended to grieve and vex him, and give a strong coloring to some of his representations. These, however, are but trifling blemishes, and affect but in a very small degree the valuable practical instruction with which the work abounds.

At the end of the treatise, there is a singular poetical dialogue between the flesh and the Spirit, intended to illustrate some of the sentiments previously stated in prose. It is, in fact, an animated debate between the two opposing principles in man's nature, containing more poetry in the thought than in the rhyme. The following passage, in which the Spirit expostulates with the flesh on its reluctance to death, contains a variety of very beautiful and poetical illustrations of death and the resurrection; and if the reader can make some allowance for a little homeliness, and an occasional want of harmony, he will be pleased with the thoughts:—

"So nature breaks and casts away the shell,
Where the now beauteous singing-bird did dwell.
Thus roses drop their sweet leaves under foot;
But the Spring shows that life was in the root.
Souls are the roots of bodies; Christ the head
Is root of both, and will revive the dead.
Our sun still shineth, when with us 'tis night;
When he returns we shall shine in his light.
Souls that behold, and praise God with the just,
Mourn not because their bodies are but dust.
Graves are but beds, where flesh till morning sleeps;
Or chests where God awhile our garments keeps.
Our folly thinks he spoils them in the keeping;
Which causeth our excessive fears and weeping;
But God, that doth our rising day foresee,
Pities not rotting flesh so much as we.
The birth of nature was deformed by sin;
The birth of grace did our repair begin;
The birth of glory at the resurrection
Finisheth all, and brings both to perfection.

Why should not fruit, when it is mellow, fall ?
Why should we linger here when God doth call ?" d

As the virtue of patience is nearly allied to self-denial, I may introduce Baxter's treatise on that subject in this place, since it is now part of the same volume with the discourse on Self-Denial, though it was published many years afterward. It is entitled "Obedient Patience. Its nature in general, and its exercise in twenty particular cases; with helps to obtain and use it, and to repress impatience." It appeared in 1682. Baxter was then the subject of severe afflictions and trials, and was thus called to the special exercise of the Christian grace which he recommends to others. The preface both explains his views of the doleful state of the times, and his reasons for writing this little work:

"I here offer to others the same which I have prepared for myself, and find necessary for my daily use. All men most savor that which they find most suitable to them. When I was young, and lay under the sad suspicions of my own heart, and the doubts of my sound conversion and justification, I was far more pleased with a sermon that opened the nature of saving grace, and helped me against such doubts, than with a sermon of affliction and its use; yea, though I began to be afflicted. But now, this is the subject of my daily necessary thoughts: men's implacable enmity maketh them somewhat necessary; but God's more immediate corrections on my body, incomparably more. And while every day almost fills my ears with the sad complaints of weak, melancholy, afflicted, impoverished, sick, pained, or otherwise distressed persons; and the weekly news-books tell us of foreign wars, persecutions, ruins, implacable contentions, malignant combinations against the church, pursuing conscience and obedience to God with diabolical rage to drive them out of the world; and of the successes of bloodthirsty men, and the deluge of atheism, idolatry, Sadduceism, infidelity, Mahometanism, hypocrisy, sensuality, ambition, worldliness, lying, perjury, malignity, and gross ignorance, which have even drowned the earth: while there is little but doleful tidings, complaints, and fears from kingdoms, churches, cities, families: and God, in judgment, permitteth mankind to be worse than serpents, toads, or wolves, if not than devils, to one another; and while wit and learning, reverend error and hypocrisy, are every day as hotly at work as any smith in his flaming forge, to blow the coals of bloody malice; and hating and destroying others, even those whom they pretend to love as themselves, seem to multitudes the most honorable and necessary work, and the killing of love and of souls and bodies, is taken for meritorious of everlasting happiness. I say,

(d) Works, vol. xi. p. 378.

while all this is so in the world, and while all flesh must look for pain, sickness, and death; and all men are yet worse to themselves, and greater burdens than all their enemies are, I cannot think a treatise of patience needless or unseasonable." [e]

Under the twenty particular cases which call for the special exercise of patience, he includes bodily affliction, the prospect of death, loss of property, or actual want; the sickness and death of friends; the unfaithfulness of friends; persecution; loss of reputation; the unrighteousness of rulers; treachery and abuse of servants and others; temptations of Satan; trouble of conscience; the loss of the means of grace, &c. &c. All these trials, at one time or another, Baxter had endured himself, and was thus qualified to symphathise with and instruct those who might be suffering from them. Most of his suggestions are calculated either to soothe or to reconcile the mind in the time of sorrow. He is faithful, yet kind; firm but tender. He could say, with the apostle, "God hath comforted us in all our tribulations, that we may be able to comfort them who are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God; for, as the sufferings of Christ have abounded in us, so our consolation also hath abounded by Christ."

In 1660, he published the 'Life of Faith, as it is the evidence of things unseen,' the substance of a sermon which he preached before the king on the 22d of July.[f] But as he afterwards, in 1670, republished this work, enlarged into a 4to volume, it will be proper to notice it in this form. It contains the original sermon enlarged; instructions for confirming belivers in the Christian faith; and directions how to live by faith, or how to exercise it on all occasions. In the discourse itself, he discovers much good taste in making no personal allusions to the king himself. Baxter could not flatter, but he could be courteous. A personal address to his majesty, had he attempted it, could scarcely have failed to be offensive; he therefore entirely avoids it, and delivers only truths which were calculated for the peasant as much as for royalty. As a sermon on such an occasion, it contains too much theology, and in all probability must have been very tiresome to Charles. But if Barrow could occupy three hours, Baxter was quite capable of securing attention for as long a period, though I dare say his discourse did not occupy half that time in its delivery. Towards the conclusion, he thus addresses his audience:

"Princes and nobles live not always; you are not the rulers of the unmoveable kingdom; but, of a boat that is in a hasty stream, or a ship under sail, that will speed both pilot and passengers to the shore! 'Dixi, estis Dii: ut moriemini ut homines.'

(e) Works, vol. xi. pp. 383, 384. (f) Ibid. vol. xii.

It was not the least or worst of kings that said, 'I am a stranger upon earth;' 'Vermis sum, non homo:' You are the greater worms, and we the little ones; but we must all say with Job, 'The grave is our house, and we must make our beds in darkness; corruption is our father, and the worm our mother and our sister.' The inexorable leveller is ready at your backs to convince you by irresistible argument, that dust you are, and to dust you shall return. Heaven should be as desirable and hell as terrible to you as to others. No man will fear you after death; much less will Christ be afraid to judge you. As the kingdoms and glory of the world were contemned by him in the hour of his temptation; so are they inconsiderable to procure his approbation. Trust not therefore to uncertain riches; value them but as they will prove at last. As you stand on higher ground than others, it is meet that you should see further. The greater are your advantages, the wiser and better you should be; and therefore should better perceive the difference between things temporal and eternal. It is always dark where glow-worms shine, and where a rotten post doth seem a fire." [g]

In a very delicate manner he presents his suit on behalf of his brethren and himself; hard must have been the heart which would turn from such a petitioner, and refuse such a prayer. "I should have become on the behalf of Christ a petitioner to you for protection and encouragement to the heirs of the invisible world; for them that preach, and them that live in this life of faith. Not for the honors and riches of the world; but for leave and countenance to work in the vineyard, and peaceably to travel through the world as strangers, and live in the communion of saints, as they believe. But, though it be for the beloved of the Lord, the apple of his eye, the people that are sure to prevail and reign with Christ for ever; whose prayers can do more for the greatest princes than you can do for them, whose joy is hastened by that which is intended for their sorrow: I shall now lay by any further suit on their behalf." [h]

Baxter had less of the common vice of preachers of his age, the foolish introduction of Greek and Latin in their sermons, than most of them. There is one singular passage in this discourse that may be regarded as an exception from his general style, and for which the auditors to whom he was preaching may be considered as an apology. The reference to the character of the age, is delicate and happy. "It has lately been a controversy, whether this be not the golden age. That is is 'ætas ferrea,' we have felt; our demonstrations are undeniable. That it is 'ætas aurata,' we have sufficient proof: and while gold is

(g) Works, vol. xii. pp. 51, 52. (h) Ibid. p. 53.

the god that rules the most, we will not deny it to be 'ætas aurea' in the poet's sense:

> 'Aurea nunc vere sunt secula: plurimus auro
> Venit honos auro conciliatur amor.'

This prevalency of things seen against things unseen, is the idolatry of the world; the subversion of nature; the perversion of our faculties and actions: making the soul a drudge to flesh, and God to be used as a servant to the world. It destroyeth piety, justice, and charity: it turneth 'jus,' by perversion, into 'vis,' or, by reversion, into 'sui.' No wonder, then, if it be the ruin of societies, when

> 'Gens sine justitia, sine remige navis in unda.'

It can possess even Demosthenes with a squinancy, if there be but an Harpalus to bring him the infection. It can make a judicature to be as Plutarch called that of Rome, ἀσεβῶν χωραν' 'impiorum regionem;' contrary to Cicero's description of Sulpitius, who was 'magis justitiæ quam juris consultus, et ad facilitatem æquitatemque omnia contulit; nec maluit litium actiones constituere, quam controversias tollere.'" [i]

The 'Sermon on Faith' occupies about fifty pages; but the treatise which grew out of it, and which may be considered as a kind of appendix, extends beyond five hundred pages: so prolific and expansive was the mind of Baxter, when it had room and verge enough for the exercise of its power. The work consists of two parts: instructions for confirming believers in the Christian faith; and directions how to exercise it on all occasions. It contains what every thing of Baxter's on practical religion does, much that is excellent; but it is more tedious than some other of his treatise, and contains more repetition than was usual with him. In treating on the confirmation of the faith, he introduces many of the same topics which are to be found in his work, 'The Reasons of the Christian Religion.' He had observed that that treatise was neglected by the common class of readers, as not sufficiently adapted to their understandings; he therefore brings forward the evidences of religion again, though in a more popular form.

His directions for the exercise of faith, are not only numerous and minute, but very similar to many of his rules or principles in his 'Christian Directory,' though the latter work was published after the 'Treatise on Faith.' The recurrence of the same sentiments, and the repetition of the same topics, were unavoidable in so voluminous a writer as Baxter; nor ought this to be regretted, as he had different objects in view in his several works, which could not perhaps have been effectually at-

(i) Works, vol. xii. pp. 44, 45.

tained by any other way. He ought, however, to have reduced some of his discussions within narrower limits.

The ' Life of Faith' is dedicated to Richard Hampden, Esq., the friend of Baxter, the son of the illustrious patriot, and the heir of his virtues. Baxter speaks with much respect of the piety of this gentleman, and his wife, Lady Letitia, and intimates his fervent gratitude for the manifold expressions of their love. He also intimates his earnest desire for the good of their "hopeful children." Alas! the eldest of these children, John Hampden, distinguished no less than his grandfather, for talents and public spirit, and far more distinguished for learning, came at last to a very melancholy end. Dr. Calamy, in his ' Own Life,' tells a most affecting story of the progress of his mind, and of the dismal termination of his existence.[i]

These objections to this publication Baxter anticipated, and meets them in his preface more snappishly than is quite desirable, either on his own account or that of the reader. The conclusion of it contains what is true, but what might have been more mildly stated.

"If it offend you that the directions are many of them difficult, and that the style requireth a slow considerate reader, I answer, the nature of the subject requireth it, and without voluminous tediousness, it cannot be avoided. Blame, therefore, your unprepared, ignorant minds; and that you are yet dull of hearing, and thus make things hard to be uttered to your understanding: because you have still need of milk, and cannot digest strong meat, but must again be taught the principles of the oracles of God. Think not to get knowledge without hard study and patient learning; by hearing nothing but what you know already, or can understand by one hasty reading over, lest you discover a conjunction of slothfulness with an ignorant and unhumbled mind. Or at least, if you must learn at so cheap a rate, or else stick still in your milk and your beginnings, be not offended if others outgo you, and think knowledge worthy of much greater diligence; and if, leaving the principles, we go on towards perfection, as long as we take them along with us, and make them the life of all that followeth, while we seem to leave them: and this we will do, if God permit."

The last considerable work in this class was published towards the close of his life. The title, which I shall give at large, as it is rather singular, contains a very full view of the subject of which it treats, as well as of the apparent feelings of the author at the time. ' Knowledge and Love Compared; in two parts I. Of falsely-pretended knowledge. II. Of true saving knowledge and love. 1. Against hasty judging and false conceits of knowledge; and for necessary suspension. 2. The excellency

(i) Vol. i. pp. 383—391.

of divine love, and the happiness of being known and loved of God. Written as greatly needful to the safety and peace of every Christian, and of the church: the only certain way to escape false religions, heresies, sects, and malignant prejudices, persecutions, and sinful wars. All caused by falsely-pretended knowledge, and hasty judging by proud, ignorant men, who know not their ignorance. By Richard Baxter, who, by God's blessing on long and hard studies, hath learned to know that he knoweth but little, to suspend his judgment of uncertainties, and to take great, necessary, certain things for the food of his faith and comforts, and the measure of his church communion."[k]

If a title-page could effect any thing, the above title must have effected a great deal: yet this is one of the small number of Baxter's practical writings, which I do not think much calculated for usefulness. It was written at several intervals before, but was published within two years of his death, when besides his memory, which he acknowledges, it is probable some other of his faculties, had begun to fail. Not that it displays imbecility; some part of it being written with great vigor; but it evinces a diminished perception of what was calculated to do good. By far the largest portion of the volume is a labored effort to show the uncertainties of knowledge, with a view to prove how ignorant man is, and to diminish confidence in his own judgment. The tendency of this argument, pursued to the length that Baxter carries it, I regard as exceedingly injurious. It is calculated to destroy due respect, both for the means of knowledge which God has provided for us, and the faculties he has given to us. It is more fitted to gender scepticism, and bewilder the mind, than to induce humility. I am well aware the author would have deprecated this effect, and that he was very far from being conscious that he was doing any thing to cause it. This does not, however, alter the character of his book. In fact, Baxter had so occupied himself with the endless and unsatisfying discussions of scholastic and metaphysical writers, that he had much difficulty in satisfying himself on many subjects, and greatly injured his own faculty of judging. In the following passage of this very treatise, he lays before the reader a view of his acquisitions in this kind of learning. It is valuable as part of his history.

"I have looked over Hutten, Vives, Erasmus, Scaliger, Salmasius, Casaubon, and many other critical grammarians, and all Gruter's critical volumes. I have read almost all the physic and metaphysics I could hear of: I have wasted much of my time among loads of historians, chronologers, and antiquarie. I despise none of their learning: all truth is useful. Mathe-

(k) Works, vol. xv.

matics, which I have least of, I find a pretty manlike sport. But if I had no other kind of knowledge than these, what were my understanding worth! what a dreaming dotard should I be! Yea, had I also all the codes and pandects, all Cujacius, Wesenbechius and their tribe, at my fingers' ends, and all other volumes of civil, national, and canon laws, with the rest in the Encyclopædia, what a puppet-play would my life be, if I had no more!

"I have higher thoughts of the schoolmen than Erasmus and our other grammarians had; I much value the method and sobriety of Aquinas, the subtlety of Scotus and Ockam, the plainness of Durandus, the solidity of Ariminensis, the profundity of Bradwardine, the excellent acuteness of many of their followers; of Aureolus, Capreolus, Bannes, Alvarez, Zumel, &c.; of Mayro, Lychetus, Trombeta, Faber, Meurisse, Rada, &c.; of Ruiz, Pennatus, Suarez, Vasquez, &c.; of Hurtado, of Albertinus, of Lud. à Dola, and many others. But how loth should I be to take such sauce for my food, and such recreations for my business! The jingling of too much and false philosophy among them, often drowns the noise of Aaron's bells. I feel myself much better in 'Herbert's Temple,' or in a heavenly treatise of faith and love; and though I do not, with Dr. Colet, distaste Augustine above the plainer Fathers, yet I am more taken with his Confessions than with his grammatical and scholastic treatises. And though I know no man whose genius more abhorreth confusion, instead of necessary distinction and method; yet I loathe impertinent, useless art, and pretended precepts and distinctions, which have not a foundation in the matter."

We cannot help regretting that such a man as Baxter had not better employed his time than in devouring such masses of frivolous and unsatisfying stuff as these writers contain. His mind required that its metaphysical propensities should be counteracted and restrained, instead of encouraged and stimulated, as it must have been by such a course of reading. He professes, it is true, to despise the subtleties of the schools, and to be better pleased with 'Herbert's Temple,' or 'Augustine's Confessions,' than with logical and scholastic debates and distinctions. This, I have no doubt, was the case; and yet he deals in this kind of writing more than any man of his age. He adverts to this objection against himself in the book, and endeavors, though unsatisfactorily, to answer it.

"When you have written all this against pretended knowledge, who is more guilty than yourself? Who so oppresseth his reader with distinctions? Are all your large writings evident certainties; even those controversies in which you have so many adversaries?" To this he answers,

(1) Works, vol. xv. pp. 15, 16.

"1. It is one thing to assert uncertainties, and another thing to anatomize, and distinctly and methodically explain, to certain truth. In all my large writings, if you find that I call any thing certain which is uncertain; that is, which I give not ascertaining evidence of, acquaint me with the particulars, and I shall retract them.

"2. I never persuaded any man to write or say no more than all men certainly know already; no, not all learned divines; for then how should we receive edification? Subjective certainty is as various as man's interests, where no two are of a size; and objective certainty must be tried by evidence, and not by other men's consenting to it." [m]

The second part of the work, on the excellency of love and its superiority to knowledge, is more in Baxter's best style of practical writing. He had then got through his uncertainties, and was treating on the nature and power of love, the first and great principle of religion. No man understood his object better, and few could treat it so well. He shows, most successfully that knowledge is but the means to a higher end; and this end is the production of love to God, and to those who bear his image. The constant and vigorous exercise of this love ought to be the highest aim, as it is the perfection of the Christian.

To this work is prefixed a very beautiful dedication to his excellent friend, Sir Henry Ashurst, 'and "the Lady Diana, his wife." "Your name," he says "is not prefixed to this Treatise, either as accusing you of the sin herein detected, or as praising you for those virtues which good men are more pleased to possess and exercise, than to have proclaimed, though they be as light that is hardly hid: but it is to vent and exercise that gratitude, which loveth not the concealment of such friendship and kindness as you and your lady eminently, and your relatives and hers, the children of the Lord Paget, have long obliged me by; and it is to posterity that I record your kindness, more than for this age, to which it hath publicly notified itself, during my public accusations, reproaches, sentences, imprisonments, and before and since: who knoweth you that knoweth not hereof? And it is to renew the record of that love and honor which I owed to your deceased father formerly, though too slenderly recorded, to be the heir and imitator of whose faith, piety, charity, patience, humility, meekness, impartiality, sincerity, and perseverance, is as great an honor and blessing as I can wish you, next to the conformity to our highest Pattern. And though he was averse to worldly pomp and grandeur, and desired that his children should not affect it, yet God, that will honor those that honor him, hath advanced his children, I believe, partly for his sake; but I entreat you all (and some other of my friends

(m) Works, vol. xv. p. 172.

whom God hath raised a blessing to their pious and charitable parents and themselves) to watch carefully, lest the deceitful world and flesh do turn such blessings into golden fetters; and to be sure to use them, as they would find, at last, on their account." [n]

Having noticed the principal works of Baxter in this department, it remains to introduce a few of his tracts, which belong to the same class. Among these must be noticed 'God's Goodness Vindicated; for the help of such, especially in melancholy, as are tempted to deny it, and think him to be cruel, because of the present and future misery of mankind: with respect to the doctrine of reprobation and damnation.' [o] This was published in 1674, at the particular request of his friend Mr. Corbet, with a view to satisfy a good man who had fallen into deep melancholy by dwelling too much on the numbers who will be damned, and the difficulty of reconciling it with the divine goodness. Corbet prefixed an epistle to it. [p]

The subject is one of a deeply mysterious nature, scarcely admitting of being fully understood in our present circumstances. Our faculties are in themselves limited; we are furnished only with partial information respecting the divine administration, and its ultimate objects and designs; and we are as yet far from the end of the whole moral economy of God. To pronounce dogmatically, therefore, on certain points which are but dimly seen, would be wrong; and to allow our minds to be distracted respecting what we do know by the things of which we are ignorant, must be no less improper.

"It is a grossly deluding and subverting way of reasoning," says Baxter, "to begin at dark and doubtful consequents, thence to argue against certain, clear, fundamental principles. As if from some doubts about the position and motion of the stars, or of the nature of light, heat, and motion, men should argue that there is no sun, or moon, or stars at all; or as if, from the many difficulties in anatomy about the circulation of the blood; the oleum nervosum, the lymph and its vessels, the passages and the succus of the pancreas and gall; the transcolation through the intestines into the venæ lactæ, the chyly glandules, and such-like; one should arise to a conclusion that there is no blood, no chyle, no veins, no glandules, no head, no body. Or, from the controversy, whether the heart be a mere muscle, without any proper parenchymæ, one should grow to conclude that there is no heart. So such persons, from points beyond man's reach, about God's decrees, and intentions, and

(n) Works, vol. xv. p. 8. (o) Ibid. vol. viii.
(p) Life, part iii. p. 85.

the mysteries of Providence, conclude or doubt against God's goodness, that is, whether, indeed, there be a God." [q]

If it were practicable to persuade men to reason on these obvious principles, how large a portion of embarrassment, and how many stumbling-blocks would be removed! Baxter does not follow up his principles with all the masterly power and closeness of argument which distinguish the Analogy of Butler; but the germ of Butler's immortal work may be said to be contained in the above passage. There are doubtless difficulties in revelation, as there are difficulties in every scheme of divine Providence which man can adopt; but there is no proper resting place between the rejection of the Gospel, on the score of its not harmonizing with our notions of the goodness of God, and absolute atheism. He who rejects Christianity on this ground, must, to be consistent, doubt whether the Supreme Being takes any interest in the affairs of his creatures; and this is all one with blotting Him out from his own universe.

Under this head I may also rank all Baxter's sermons preached on particular occasions, and which do not require minute consideration. They may be placed either here, or under the head of his writings on Conversion, as they are of a mixed character. The following are among these, 'The Vain Religion of the Formal Hypocrite, and the Mischief of an Unbridled Tongue, described in several Sermons, preached at the Abbey in Westminster, before many Members of the Honorable House of Commons, 1660.' 'The Fool's Prosperity the Occasion of his Destruction, a Sermon, preached at Covent Garden.' 'A Sermon on Repentance, preached before the House of Commons, on the 30th of April, 1660.' 'One on Right Rejoicing, preached in St. Paul's before the Lord Mayor and Aldermen, after his Majesty's return, May 10, 1660.' 'What Light must Shine in Our Works.' 'True Christianity, or Christ's absolute Dominion, and Man's necessary Self-Resignation and Subjection.' 'Two Assize Sermons.' His 'Farewell Sermon,' intended for his flock at Kidderminster. All these discourses are now printed together in the seventeenth and eighteenth volumes of his works.

'The Cure of Melancholy by Faith and Physic,' a sermon intended for the morning exercises, but which was never delivered, is a curious specimen of Baxter's preaching; abounding in medical recipes as well as in grave religious advice. He is quite right, however, in maintaining that physic is necessary, as well as faith, to cure melancholy.

Baxter appears to have had great experience in dealing with melancholy persons. The following passage in his Life relates

(q) Works, vol. viii. p. 513.

to the subject of this discourse, and for its practical instruction deserves to be quoted. "I was troubled this year (1671)," he says, "with multitudes of melancholy persons, from several parts of the land; some of high quality, some of low, some very exquisitely learned, some unlearned; as I had been above twenty years before. I know not how it came to pass, but if men fell melancholy, I must hear from them or see them, more than any physician I know. I mention it for these three uses, to the reader, as out of all their cases I have gathered: 1. That we must very much take heed lest we ascribe melancholy phantasms and passions to God's Spirit: for they are strange apprehensions that melancholy can cause. 2. I would warn all young persons to live modestly, and keep at a sufficient distance from objects that tempt them to carnal lust. Above all, I warn young students and apprentices to avoid the beginning of this sin, as they little think what one spark may kindle. 3. I advise all men to take heed as placing religion too much in fears, and tears, and scruples; or in any other kind of sorrow, but such as tendeth to raise us to a high estimation of Christ, to the magnifying of his grace, to a sweeter taste of the love of God, and to the firmer resolution against sin: that tears and grief be not commended inordinately for themselves, or as clear signs of a converted person. We ought to call men more to look after *duty* than after *signs* as such. Set self-love to work, and spare not; so will you call them much more to the love of God. Let them know that this love is their best sign, but that it ought to be exercised for a higher reason, than as a sign of our own hopes; for that motive alone will not produce true love to God. As the Antinomians too much exclude humiliation and signs of grace, so many of late have made their religion too much to consist in the seeking of these signs out of their proper time and place, without referring them to that obedience, love, and joy, in which true religion doth principally consist." [r]

These very judicious observations show that Baxter was not only a most careful observer of the phenomena of human nature, with which he was so largely conversant, but that in dealing with men he was guided by the soundest principles of philosophy and religion. He justly considered many of the mental or spiritual diseases respecting which he was consulted, to arise from a diseased state of the animal frame, and that the assistance of the physician and the laboratory was required as well as the divine. He prescribed for the body as well as for the soul, though not always in either case with effect.

(r) Life, part iii. pp. 85, 86. Among the Baxter MSS. preserved in the Red-cross-street library, are numerous letters addressed to him by persons in distress of mind, and copies of letters sent by him in reply. Both while he was at Kidderminster, and after his removal from it, especially about the time of his preparing the above discourse, he seems to have had a great deal to do in this way.

His views of the proper method of obtaining Christian comfort, and arriving at full satisfaction respecting a personal interest in the salvation of Christ, were sound and highly important. He did not consider these enjoyments, desirable as they are, as what ought to be directly sought, or pursued for themselves. He regarded them as effects or results rather than objects of direct pursuit. Neither health nor happiness will generally be secured by seeking them for their own sake; and will seldom fail to be enjoyed if sought for in a proper manner. This is no less true respecting the health and happiness of the soul; men can never attain them by their being made the grand or exclusive objects of attention.

Baxter produced the right kind of Christian experience, by presenting continually before the mind a great object of attraction, whose holy influence could not fail to accomplish the most delightful and salutary effects, if steadily contemplated. To produce love to God, which is the grand design of all true religion, and the spring of all purifying joy, he spoke of His love in all its fulness, and freeness, and splendor. He aimed at producing an overwhelming sense of gratitude and obligation, by thus exhibiting the infinite riches of the divine generosity. He knew that this would necessarily take the mind off from itself, and engage the exercise of all its faculties on an object at once worthy of their most active and enlarged exercise, and capable of affording the purest and sublimest satisfaction. He knew that the principle of love to God, being once sufficiently roused, would exert itself in doing all the will of God, and in that very exertion happiness would be experienced. The signs and evidences of the Christian character would multiply and abound, and thus those doubts and perplexities would be removed that haunt the soul which is directed chiefly to itself, for reasons of comfort and confidence before God.

His own experience is a happy illustration of the beneficial tendency of these views, and of the conduct which he pursued towards others From his habit of body, and peculiarities of mind, it might be supposed that he would himself be the subject of much morbid feeling. But this was not the case. He tells us that he never was the subject of melancholy, or that species of mental depression arising from doubts and fears respecting the enjoyment of the divine favor, after he was properly enlightened by the Gospel. He had penetrating views of sin, deep and solemn impressions of death and eternity; but they were all founded on his clear perceptions of the character of God, and the declarations of his word; and were always connected with the enjoyment of calm satisfaction and holy tranquillity of mind. He feared always, but he always, loved; he trembled, but he also rejoiced. Religion was his life; its dis-

coveries, both elevated and purified his mind; and in the discharge of its duties he found full employment for all his active and energetic powers. In the time of suffering, he fled to it for relief and repose; and he never fled in vain. It was to him a constant, as he ever found it a welcome and a sure, refuge. When in any measure free from personal and outward suffering, and capable of labor, his work left him no time for melancholy musings, or harassing fears respecting his personal safety. It was his meat and his drink to do the will of God, and in doing that will he found a continual feast. Let Christianity be but thus treated, and it will never fail to produce the same practical effects, and to afford the same heavenly joy.

CHAPTER V.

WORKS ON CHRISTIAN ETHICS.

Introductory Observations—Systematic Theology—The Fathers—Schoolmen—Casuists—Reformers—Calvin's Institutions—Works of Perkins—Archbishop Usher's System—Leigh's Body of Divinity—Baxter's 'Christian Directory'—Intended as the Second Part of his 'Methodus'—His own Account of it—Remarks on the Arrangement—Opposed to the Politics of Hooker—Progress of the Doctrine of Passive Obedience in England—Character of the 'Directory'—Compared with the 'Ductor Dubitantium' of Taylor—'The Reformed Pastor'—'Reasons for Ministerial Plainness'—'Poor Man's Family Book'—'The Catechising of Families'—'The Mother's Catechism'—'Sheets for the Poor and the Afflicted'—'Directions to the Justices of the Peace'—'How to do Good to Many'—'Counsels to Young Men'—'The Divine Appointment of the Lord's Day'—Concluding Remarks.

If obedience to the will of God be the end and design of all religion, it ought to occupy a chief part of our attention in every discussion of its nature. However difficult it may be to teach men some of the doctrines of religion, the most formidable difficulties really belong to its practice. This arises not from the obscurity which attaches to what God requires, but from the backwardness of man to comply with the requisition. His natural inclinations are all enlisted on the side of disobedience, or, at least, of aversion to a full conformity of disposition to the mind of God. Hence if the vestige of a doubt rests on any divine precept, or inhibition, to which it may be felt inconvenient or undesirable to render positive compliance, advantage is sure to be taken of that doubt. Every subterfuge or excuse which ingenuity can devise, will be resorted to in order to quiet conscience, or to justify to others the conduct which is pursued.

The opportunities and means of practising this species of evasion are very considerable. The unavoidable imperfection and ambiguity of human language, of which even a divine revelation in that language is not altogether divested; the necessary exceptions belonging to many of the general laws of God, with the great variety of circumstances into which men are thrown, presenting temptations to avail themselves of supposed exceptions in their favor; these, together with the deceitfulness of the human heart, are among the things which create difficulty to the Christian moralist, and have furnished abundant employment to the casuistical divine.

Were it not for the mistake which extensively prevails among mankind, that their interests and those of the law of God are

not the same, the difficulty of communicating instruction on religion would not be very formidable. This fatal error, however, is mixed up with all our natural reasonings, and gives a wrong direction or bias to our every thought and feeling. The Creator of the universe is regarded with jealousy and suspicion by his own creature. The principles of his moral administration are supposed to concern rather his own glory, than the happiness of the universe. His laws are pronounced alike arbitrary and severe, if not positively unjust. If the reason of some of them is not fully stated, that concealment is regarded as a sufficient apology for neglect or noncompliance: where the reason is stated, it is not always approved; being perhaps regarded as proceeding from arbitrary power, rather than arising from justice and goodness.

Where such a state of mind prevails, it is at once obvious that we have to do, not with the understanding so much as with the disposition. The darkness of the mind is not mere intellectual ignorance; which an adequate process of instruction could remove. The understanding is indeed dark, but it arises from "an alienation of the life from God." There is ignorance, it is true, but it consists in what the Scriptures emphatically call "blindness of heart." Hence the influence which Christ himself ascribes to inclination in the reception of the will of God: "If any man be inclined to do the will of God, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God;" and hence arises the absolute necessity of that divine teaching which the Scriptures invariably represent as lying at the foundation of all enlightened and acceptable obedience to the Most High.

The inspired writers, accordingly, never confine their instructions to the understanding, or regard the reception and influence of Christianity as if they merely resulted from an intellectual process. They do not record their doctrines in creeds, or deliver their precepts in formal summaries. They communicate both chiefly in the form of addresses to the conscience and to the heart, or in reasonings which, while they are powerfully calculated to enlighten and convince the understanding, are no less fitted to engage the warmest feelings of the soul in favor of obedience to Him, whose highest moral glory is summed up in the attribute of LOVE.

This plan has not been followed by the generality of writers on systematic theology. The theory and practice of religion have been unwisely separated from each other to the injury of both. Thus, what may be regarded as speculative, has been deprived of its most powerful recommendation; and what is practical, has been divested of its living principle. The one is presented as soul without body, the other as body without spirit. In the former, religion is generalised into abstract prin-

ciples; in the latter, it is shrivelled into outward forms, and reduced to a joyless submission.

It cannot be denied, however, that there are some advantages connected with the separate discussion of these subjects, when properly conducted. This more especially belongs to the press than to the pulpit. In the latter, they ought never to be disjoined. It is not the place for abstract, philosophical disquisition; but for the evangelical enforcement of the truths and duties of Christianity. It is easier to guard against misapprehensions in a written work than in oral discourse: many things can be conveniently and appropriately discussed in books, which would be altogether unsuitable as topics for public preaching.

It would be vain to look for much of systematic theology in the fathers or early writers of the Christian church. They lived too near the period of the Apostles, to feel the necessity or importance of this kind of writing. Nor were their circumstances at all favorable to it. Most of them were incapable of any thing very profound; the body of the people were of the same description; and both teachers and taught were so much conversant with a state of suffering, as to have scarcely either time or inclination for any thing but what bore immediately on the practice or the consolations of the Gospel. Origen and Cyril of Jerusalem were the first among the Greeks who did any thing in this way. The former, in his work, περὶ ἀρχῶν,—or Four Books concerning Principles, while he gives some information, astounds us with allegories and absurdities; the latter, in his 'Catechetical Discourses,' which were written in his youth, conveys some useful instruction in a less objectionable manner. Augustine, in his 'Enchiridion, or Treatise on Faith, Hope, and Charity,' presents a kind of system, while, in some of his other writings, he discusses many of those questions, which, at a future period, were reduced into more regular form, and occasioned interminable disputes.

It was in the middle ages, that Scholastic Theology combined into regular system the principles and duties of religion; but unfortunately it presented the subject in a shape, not only opposed to sound philosophy, and repugnant to all correct taste; but was calculated to do the most serious injury to religion. The works of Abelard, Lombard, Aquinas, and the other angelical, or seraphic, doctors of the dark ages, afford proofs of no inconsiderable talent, especially in dialectics; but unfortunately it was employed rather to bewilder the mind than to aid the discovery of truth. The metaphysics of Plato, the logic of Aristotle, and the corrupt theology of the church of Rome, were amalgamated into one crude incoherent mass of unintelligible dogmas, which was honored with the title of the orthodox faith: and

the slightest departure from which was deemed a pernicious heresy. [s]

The Romish Casuists may be considered as succeeding the scholastic writers, and distinct from them. They occupied themselves not so much with the metaphysics of doctrine as with the metaphysics of practice. Conscience was professedly the chief object of their attention; and the canon law, with the opinions of the fathers, and the decrees of councils and popes, was the rule by which they directed it. Auricular confession naturally gendered this description of writers. It laid open the interior of man to his fellow man to an improper extent; it created a prurient curiosity, and often called forth the utmost effort of human ingenuity in solving real or pretended difficulties: in finding consolation for the wounded conscience, or apologies for the hardened sinner. To assist the junior priesthood in trafficking advantageously with the eternal interests of men, and to render them skilful in all manner of devices for keeping the conscience under subjection to papal authority, were the great objects of the Romish Casuists. Their works are storehouses of logical subtleties, and magazines of moral combustibles sufficient to distract and destroy the universe. Such are the writings of Sanchez Suarez, Escobar, and others of the same school.

This style of writing in the department of systematic and casuistic theology among the Romanists, gave place to a simpler and more practical mode of treating such subjects, under the denomination of the "Common Places" and theological counsels of the reformers. Disgusted with the metaphysical absurdities and logomachy of the schoolmen, Melancthon, Luther, and others, produced compendiums, or brief systems, of religion, in which, arranged under various heads, the principal articles of Christian faith and duty were plainly stated. The Confessions of the reformed churches necessarily assumed a systematic form, and expositions, or commentaries on them, brought the doctrines and duties of religion in regular digests before the people of every country in which they were adopted. In most of these productions, while both occupy one book, the *credenda* and the *agenda*, are always treated distinctly.

In Systematic Theology, the Institutions of Calvin, though not the first in the order of time, carried off the palm from all its predecessors, and has not yet been surpassed by any competitor. Diversity of opinion may exist respecting some of the positions of the Genevese reformer, and even among those who hold his general views of Christian doctrine, there may not be an entire concurrence in every sentiment or expression; but while profound piety, masculine energy of mind, acuteness and

(s) See Morell's 'Elements,' &c. p. 295.

strength of argument, perspicuity of statement, and purity of language, continue to be respected among men, the 'Christian Institutes' of John Calvin will secure for their author immortal honor.

Our own Reformers did not contribute much in this department, but many of the continental works were translated and introduced into this country soon after their original publication. This was the case with the leading works of Luther, Melancthon, Calvin, and the other distinguished men who adorned the revival of religion and literature in Europe. Their writings spread with the rapidity of light itself, and produced all its cheering effects; dispersing darkness, correcting errors, and diffusing gladness and joy. Their disciples not only embraced their principles, but their spirit; and wherever they were found, reflected and multiplied the benefits which they received.

William Perkins is, properly, the first original writer in our language on the theory and practice of religion, in a regular systematic form. 'The Golden Chain, or the Description of Theology; containing the Order of the Causes of Salvation and Damnation,' was written by him in Latin, but appeared in English, translated by another. It was followed by his 'Exposition of the Creed, and of the Lord's Prayer;' and by his 'Three Books of Cases of Conscience.' Perkins was a thorough predestinarian; and in the works above enumerated, though published at different times, he has furnished a tolerably complete body of divinity, on Calvinistic principles. He was a man of highly respectable talents and great piety, and writes in a style superior to most of his contemporaries.

What is called Archbishop Usher's 'Body of Divinity,' was published without his knowledge or consent, in 1645, by Mr. Downham, and is a collection from the writings of others, rather than Usher's own.[t] The only other work of this description deserving of notice, which appeared in English, prior to the works of Baxter, is the 'Body of Divinity,' by Edward Leigh, which was published in 1662. The author is known as having furnished several useful publications. His Hebrew and Greek lexicons show that he was a respectable scholar; and his Annotations on the New Testament, though not elaborate, show that he was a man of sound judgment. The system of divinity is tolerably well arranged, and discovers very considerable knowledge of the Scriptures; but it is broken down into so many divisions and subdivisions, that it appears too much of a dry tabular representation of religion.

The work of Baxter, of which I am about to give some

(t) Parr's 'Life of Usher,' p. 62.

account, the reader will observe, is but the half of his system of theology. The other half is contained in his 'Methodus,' which is properly placed under the head of his doctrinal works. The reason for publishing the one in Latin and the other in English, is not very obvious or satisfactory; but it so pleased the author. I have been more particular in my introductory observations on the present volume, because it is not only the largest of all Baxter's works, but because I purposely avoided saying any thing on the points adverted to, when treating of the 'Methodus.' The following is the title:—

'A Christian Directory: or a Sum of Practical Theology, and Cases of Conscience: directing Christians how to use their Knowledge and Faith; how to improve all Helps and Means, and to perform all Duties; how to overcome Temptations, and to escape or mortify every Sin.'[u] It appeared in a large folio, in 1673, besides occupying one of the volumes in the folio edition of his 'Practical Works,' published in 1707. In addition to what is said of this book, in connexion with the 'Methodus,' he says of it—"As Amesius's 'Cases of Conscience'[x] are to his 'Medulla' the second and practical part of theology, so is this to a 'Methodus theologiæ,' which I have not yet published.[y] It was written in 1664 and 1665, except the ecclesiastical cases of conscience, and a few sheets since added. And since the writing of it, some invitation drew me to publish my 'Reasons of the Christian Religion,' my 'Life of Faith,' and 'Directions for weak Christians;' by which the work of the two first chapters is more fully done."[z]

"I must do myself the right to notify to the reader, that this treatise was written when I was, for not subscribing, forbidden by the law to preach; and when I had been long separated far from my library, and from all books, saving an inconsiderable parcel which wandered with me where I went. By which means this book hath two defects. It hath no cases of conscience but what my bear memory brought to hand; and cases are so innumerable that it is far harder, methinks, to remember them than to answer them; whereby it came to pass, that some of the ecclesiastical cases are put out of their proper place, because I could not seasonably remember them: for I

(u) Works, vols. ii., iii., iv., v., vi. The Directory was translated into German, by John Nicholai, and published at Frankfort, in 1693, 4to.—Walchii Bib. Theol. Sel., tom. ii. p. 1106.

(x) The work of Amesius, referred to by Baxter, is a beautiful and accurate *Enchiridion*. It is entitled, 'De Conscientia, et ejus jure, vel easibus Libri Quinque.' My edition was printed at Amsterdam in 1654. Within the compass of a small 12mo volume is comprised a larger portion of practical and scriptural instruction than in almost any book that I know. He is in general remarkably accurate in his definitions, and had a power of compression utterly unknown to Baxter.

(y) The 'Methodus' was not published till the year 1681.

(z) Works, vol. ii. Advertisement, p. i.

had no one casuist but Amesius with me. After about twelve years' separation, having received my library, I find that the very sight of Sayrus, Fragoso, Roderiquez, Tolet, &c., might have helped my memory to a greater number.[a] But perhaps these will be enough for those that I intend them for. And from the same cause, the margin is unfurnished of such citations as are accounted an ornament, and in some cases are very useful. The scraps inserted out of my few trivial books at hand, being so mean, that I am well content (except about monarchy, part iv.) that the reader pass them by as not worthy of his notice.

"It is likely that the absence of books, will appear to the reader's loss in the materials of the treatise; but I shall have this advantage by it, that he will not accuse me as a plagiary. And it may be some little advantage to him, that he hath no transcript of any man's books which he had before; but the product of some experience, with a naked, unbiassed perception of the matter or things themselves.

"Long have our divines been wishing for some fuller casuistical tractate; Perkins began well; Bishop Sanderson hath done excellently, '*De juramento;*' Amesius hath exceeded all, though briefly; Mr. David Dickson hath put more of our English cases about the state of sanctification, into Latin, than ever was done before him; Bishop Jeremy Taylor hath in two folios but begun the copious performance of the work. And still men are calling for more, which I have attempted; hoping that others will come after and do better than we all.[b]

"It is long ago since many foreign divines subscribed a request, that the English would give them in Latin a sum of our practical theology, which Mr. Dury sent over; and twelve great divines of ours wrote to Bishop Usher, as Dr. Bernard tells us

(a) It is a happy thing that Baxter was absent from his books while engaged on this work; for had he been able to refer to the Romish casuists, he would have been in danger of spoiling his own performance. It is large enough, and minute enough, as it is; had it contained the stuff which these writers would have suffered, it would have been rendered useless, and perhaps unfit for perusal.

(b) Jeremy Taylor has accounted very justly and ingeniously for the scarcity of casuistical books among the reformed churches in the preface to his 'Ductor Dubitantium.' He says, "they were like the children of Israel in the days of Saul and Jonathan, forced to go down to the forges of the Philistines to sharpen every man his share and his coulter, his axe and his mattock. We had swords and shares of our own, enough for defence, and more than enough for disputation; but in this more necessary part, in the conduct of consciences, we did receive our answers from abroad, till we found that our old needs were sometimes very ill supplied, and new necessities did every day arise."—*Works*, vol. xi. p. 346. His observations on the character and tendency of the Roman casuists, are exceedingly just and important. "We have found," he says, "the merchants to be deceivers, and the wares too often falsified." The work of Dickson, referred to by Baxter, is the 'Therapeutica Sacra, etc., or the Method of Healing the Diseases of Conscience, &c.' It was published in Latin in 1656, and in English in 1695. The author was a Scottish minister, professor of divinity successively in the Universities of Glasgow and Edinburgh. He was a highly respectable man, both in talents and learning, and the author of several valuable expository works. He died in 1662.

in his Life, to draw them up a form or method. But it was never done among them all. And it is said that Bishop Downame, at last undertaking it, died in the attempt. Had this been done, it is like my labor might have been spared. But being undone, I have thus made this essay. But I have been necessitated to leave out much about conversion, mortification, self-denial, self-acquaintance, faith, justification, judgment, glory, &c., because I had written of them all before." [c]

The reader will probably be amused, as I have been, with the following defence of himself for writing many and large books. "As to the numbers and length of my writings, it is my own labor that maketh them so, and my own great trouble, that the world cannot be sufficiently instructed and edified in fewer words. But, would not all your sermons set together be as long? And why is not much and long preaching blamable, if long writings be? Are not the works of Augustine, and Chrysostom, much longer? Who yet hath reproached Aquinas or Suarez, Calvin or Zanchy, &c. for the number and greatness of the volumes they have written? Why do you contradict yourselves by affecting great libraries? When did I ever persuade any one of you, to buy or read any book of mine? What harm will they do to those that let them alone? Or what harm can it do you for other men to read them? Let them be to you as if they had never been written; and it will be nothing to you how many they are. And if all others take not you for their tutors to choose for them what books they must read, that is not my doing, but their own. If they err in taking themselves to be fitter judges than you what tendeth most to their own edification, why do you not teach them better? Either it is God's truth or error which I write. If error, why doth no one of you show so much charity as by word or writing to instruct me better, nor evince it to my face, but do all to others by backbiting? If truth, what harm will it do? If men had not leisure to read our writings, the booksellers would silence us, and save you the labor; for none would print them. But who can please all men? Whilst a few of you cry out of too much, what if twenty or a hundred for one be yet for more? How shall I know whether you or they be the wiser and the better men?" [d]

This is cynical enough, but very characteristic. The work is arranged by the author under four heads: Christian Ethics, or private Duties; Christian Economics, or Family Duties; Christian Ecclesiastics, or Church Duties; and Christian Politics, or Duties to Rulers and Neighbors. This plan is not so complete or systematic as might have been expected from a man

(c) Works, vol. ii. pp. 7—9. (d) Ibid. pp. 10, 11.

who studied order so much as Baxter did, and who attached so much importance to it. The arrangement of a moral system seems accurately marked by the apostle Paul in the three expressive words which he employs: (Titus ii. 12.) "Godliness, righteousness, and sobriety." All the duties which belong to man are included under the head of what he owes to God, what is due to himself, and what belongs to others. This arrangement has usually been adopted by the modern writers on moral subjects. Baxter would seem to omit the first of these heads altogether; and his three last departments belong all to one division—the duties which we owe to others. But it must be said for him, that he had anticipated himself greatly in some of his former writings, by which the regularity of his plan was injured; and under the head of private duties, he includes much of what man owes to God, as well as of what is due to his own interests.

In other respects the plan is at once most comprehensive and particular, embracing, beyond any other book with which I am acquainted, the largest portion of practical casuistry and instruction. It discovers the amazing extent and minuteness of the author's acquaintance with the Scriptures, and with all the principles of human nature. Nothing seems to have escaped his observation, or appeared too difficult to deter him from, at least, attempting its solution. That he should have always succeeded, is too much to expect. The undertaking was too vast even for the mind of Baxter, and his manner of conducting it sometimes discovers weakness; while, on the whole, the work is a powerful illustration of the strength of his mind, and the fertility of his genius.

What is called moral philosophy in modern times, is any thing but the philosophy of morals. Our modern philosophers have supposed they should be better employed in discussing mental operations and the phenomena of human nature, than the principles of obedience to the will of God. And indeed where divine revelation is either left out of the discussion, or placed below what is called natural religion, it is better that they should amuse themselves with other subjects than with the duties which man owes to the Creator. Baxter's work is full of genuine philosophy. Man's responsibility is the basis of his system; the revelation of Heaven its regulating law; his own happiness the inseparable concomitant of the obedience thus produced, having the divine glory for its ultimate end.

No part of the work is less satisfactory than that which treats on politics. This is one of the subjects Baxter least understood, and on which, therefore, he never wrote consistently. It is very entertaining to find him waging war with Hooker, whose principles he considered too popular and democratic. Who

would expect to find the author of the 'Ecclesiastical Polity' a whig, and Richard Baxter the Nonconformist a tory? Yet so it is; the one, inconsistently with his leading principles on church government, maintains that the people are the proper source of all power or authority; the other disputes this, no less inconsistently with some of his sentiments, and with the conduct which in regard to such matters he had pursued.

Hooker maintains, with great ability, the doctrine which he lays down in the following passage:

"That which we spake of the power of government, must here be applied to the power of making laws whereby to govern; which power God hath over all, and by the natural law, whereto he hath made all subject, the lawful power of making laws to command whole politic societies of men, belongeth so properly to the same entire societies, that for any prince or potentate, of what kind soever upon earth, to exercise the same of himself, and not either by express commission immediately and personally received from God, or else by authority derived at first from their consent, upon whose persons they impose laws, it is no better than mere tyranny. Laws they are not, therefore, which public approbation hath not made so."[e]

The reasoning by which Hooker sustains this enlightened constitutional doctrine, it is unnecessary that I should quote. Baxter never appears weaker than in his attempt to overthrow it: he thus introduces his answer, which is a fair sample of all the rest of his argument. The passage shows his respect for Hooker, and his want of confidence in himself on this subject, while it avows a principle subversive of the most valuable rights which we enjoy.

"Because the authority of this famous divine is, with his party, so great, I shall adventure to say something, lest his words do the more harm; but not by confident opposition, but humble proposal and submission of my judgment to superior and wiser men, as, being conscious of my own inferiority and infirmity, I take all this to be an assertion nowhere by him proved, and by me elsewhere disproved fully. Laws are the effects and signs of the ruler's will and instruments of government. Legislation is the first part of government; and if the whole body are naturally governors, the 'Pars imperans' and 'Pars subdita' are confounded. If the most absolute monarch can make no laws, then disobeying them were no fault. It is enough that their power be derived from God immediately, though the persons be chosen by men. Their authority is not derived from the people's consent, but from God, by their consent, as a bare condition, 'sine qua non.' What if a community say all to their elected king,

(e) Works, vol. vi. p. 27.

'We take not ourselves to have any governing power to give or use, but we only choose you or your family to that office which God hath instituted, who, in that institution, giveth you the power upon our choice:' can any man prove that such a king hath no power but as a tyrant, because the people disclaim the giving of the power, when, indeed, they do their duty? Remember that, in all this, we speak not of the government of this or that particular kingdom; but of kingdoms and other commonwealths indefinitely."[f]

This passage contains the essence of the doctrine of passive obedience as distinctly as was ever contended for by the highest churchman of the day. It obviously confounds the divine appointment of government, with a particular form of government, or with the principles of the governing party. It is monstrous to contend that the right to govern, or the authority to execute laws, is not derived from the people, but from God. Such a principle is the basis of all arbitrary governments, and was the root of all the evils which so long affected the country, and led to the repeated subversion of those who considered themselves the only legitimate possessors of the right to govern. The doctrine contended for is not the doctrine of the Bible; and the maintenance of it is a singular proof of weakness and inconsistency in a man who took such a lead as Baxter, in a body whose very existence implies the principle against which he disputes, and whose exertions have done more to establish that principle in Great Britain than all other things together.

The 'Christian Directory' was published at the time when disputes on the subject of passive obedience and non-resistance began to be busily agitated. Baxter, though a Nonconformist in fact, was a Churchman rather than a Dissenter in principle. His judgment was in this way entangled, and his consistency frequently destroyed. Hallam, with his usual candor and discrimination, accounts for the principles and writings of some of the clergy on this subject. As the passage explains, though it does not justify, the part which Baxter took, as well as gives a most correct view of the nature and progress of the discussion, I shall give it at large.

"It is not my intention to censure, in any strong sense of the word, the Anglican clergy, at this time, for their assertion of absolute non-resistance, so far as it was done without calumny and insolence towards those of another way of thinking, and without self-interested adulation of the ruling power. Their error was very dangerous, and had nearly proved destructive of the whole constitution; but it was one which had come down with high recommendation, and of which they could only, perhaps, be

(f) Works, vol. vi. pp. 27, 28.

undeceived, as men are best undeceived of most errors, by experience, that it might hurt themselves. It was the tenet of their homilies, their canons, their most distinguished divines and casuists. It had the apparent sanction of the legislature in a statute of the present reign. Many excellent men, as was shown after the Revolution, who had never made use of this doctrine as an engine of faction or private interest, could not disentangle their minds from the arguments or the authority on which it rested. But by too great a number it was eagerly brought forward to serve the purposes of arbitrary power, or at best to fix the wavering Protestantism of the court, by professions of unimpeachable loyalty. To this motive, in fact, we may trace a good deal of the vehemence with which the non-resisting principle had been originally advanced by the church of England under the Tudors, and was continually urged under the Stuarts. If we look at the tracts and sermons published by both parties after the Restoration, it will appear manifest that the Romish and Anglican churches bade, as it were, against each other for the favor of the two royal brothers. The one appealed to its acknowledged principles, while it denounced the pretensions of the holy see to release subjects from their allegiance, and the bold theories of popular government, which Mariana and some other Jesuits had promulgated. The others retaliated on the first movers of the Reformation, and expatiated on the usurpation of Lady Jane Grey, not to say, Elizabeth, and the republicanism of Knox or Calvin.

"From the era of the exclusion bill, especially, to the death of Charles II., a number of books were published in favor of an indefeasible hereditary right of the crown, and of absolute non-resistance. These were, however, of two very different classes. The authors of the first, who were perhaps the more numerous, did not deny the legal limitations of monarchy. They admitted that no one was bound to concur in the execution of unlawful commands. Hence, the obedience they deemed indispensable, was denominated passive; an epithet, which, in modern usage, is little more than redundant, but at that time made a sensible distinction. If all men should confine themselves to this line of duty, and merely refuse to become the instruments of such unlawful commands, it was evident that no tyranny could be carried into effect. If some should be wicked enough to co-operate against the liberties of their country, it would still be the bounden obligation of Christians to submit. Of this, which may be reckoned the moderate party, the most eminent were Hickes, in a treatise called 'Jovian,' and Sherlock, in his 'Case of Resistance to the Supreme Powers.' To this, also, must have belonged Archbishop Sancroft, and the great body of non-

juring clergy, who had refused to read the declaration of indulgence under James II., and whose conduct in that respect would be utterly absurd, except on the supposition that there existed some lawful boundaries of the royal authority."[g]

But I must return to the general character of the Christian Directory. It is as a book of casuistry, rather than in any other point of view, that it must be contemplated. It is filled with a multitude of directions for the regulation of conduct, and with innumerable cases of conscience, which the author endeavors to solve. For this kind of work, Baxter was pre-eminently qualified, both by the constitution of his own mind, and by his extensive experience. What he was as a metaphysician, has been frequently adverted to. He was trained to casuistry by the writings of the scholastic divines, to which he had devoted so much attention, and of whose discussions he was a profound admirer.

In addition to this, Baxter, from various causes, had for many years been consulted in doubtful and difficult cases, probably by a greater number of persons than any other man of his age. It was an age, too, it should be remembered, in which that kind of spiritual consultation and prescription, was carried to a great extent. We are told by Bishop Heber, in his Life of Jeremy Taylor, that during the time that the celebrated Dr. Owen was dean of Christ-church, a regular office for the satisfaction of doubtful consciences was held in Oxford, to which the students at last ludicrously gave the name of 'Scruple shop.'[h] His Lordship should not have forgotten to mention, in connexion with this, that after the Restoration, there was an office established in London for the sale of dispensations to churchmen to eat flesh in the time of Lent.

Casuistry, in fact, belonged to all the parties of the times. The 'Ductor Dubitantium' shows how it was understood and practised by churchmen; as the 'Christian Directory' illustrates the same thing in relation to the Nonconformists. Whether the palm in this species of writing ought to belong to Taylor or to Baxter, I am not casuist enough myself to take upon me to determine. Taylor had more learning and a greater luxuriance of imagination than Baxter; but the latter was more than his equal in acuteness, in the power of distinguishing, in his knowledge of the human heart, and in the correct estimation of scriptural principle and practice. Taylor deals more with general principles; Baxter with particular cases. The former is frequently extremely happy in his illustrations; the latter in his expositions of the deceitfulness of the human heart, and the secret workings of error and sin. Both may be consulted oc-

(g) Hallam, vol. ii. pp. 624—627. (h) Taylor's Works, vol. i. p. 270.

casionally with profit and advantage; but if resorted to as oracles, they will frequently be found as unsatisfactory as the responses of the Delphic tripod.

The grand objection to the work of Baxter is, that it attempts too much. It substitutes minute instructions instead of the general principles and precepts of the word of God. It leaves too little for the spontaneity of the Christian mind, and perplexes and bewilders by a useless multiplication of questions and cases. He discusses, for instance, thirty tongue sins, and twenty questions for the conviction of drunkards. He proposes eighteen necessary qualifications of lawful recreation; describes eighteen sorts that are sinful; and proposes twelve convincing questions to those who plead for such pastimes. He answers thirty-six questions about contracts; twenty about buying and selling, sixteen representing theft; and *one hundred and seventy-four* about matters ecclesiastical!

Among other subjects, he considers, whether a mental promise doth oblige; whether money may be given to a bishop, patron, &c., by way of gratitude; whether we may use many words in buying and selling; whether we may buy as cheap as we can; and whether a landlord may raise his rents? He inquires whether love of sleep may be a mortal sin; and gives directions against sinful dreams. He discusses whether we may follow the fashions; and whether deformity may be hid by painting or apparel; whether a minister may kneel down in the pulpit, and use his private prayers when he is in the assembly.

I am far from thinking that such questions, and many others on which Baxter bestowed great labor, are absolutely indifferent; but the attempt to meet the infinite variety of puzzles which may be presented in morals and manners, by writing books, is the vainest in which man can engage. Many of Baxter's answers are quite unsatisfactory; they either leave the question where it was, express a vain wish that some things were different, or actually create doubts and perplexities where none existed before. They tend to generate disease as well as to cure it. On sensitive and scrupulous minds, they are in danger of operating injuriously, by feeding and strengthening morbid feelings; while, to minds of a stronger texture, which may be disposed to practise evasion, they answer little purpose, or suggest means of self-defence and justification.

While I thus freely express myself respecting the imperfections or faults of this extensive work, I entertain a strong opinion of the large mass of valuable practical instruction which it contains. One feature pervades it—Baxter never errs in the way of pleading for evil, or apologizing for its appearance. If he errs, it is on the side of rigidity, and not of laxity. Wherever there is a doubt, he holds that the law of God, and

not the creature, should have the benefit of that doubt. He never teaches men how near they may approach to evil without danger; but invariably inculcates the necessity of keeping at the greatest distance from it. Many of the books of Romish casuistry, seem to have been constructed for the purpose of justifying men in the commission of sin. They are little better than traps and snares, whose end is death. Even Taylor could go the length of admitting, that private evil may in some cases be done by public men, for the public necessity. But though various of Baxter's rules may easily be abused, I have not observed any case in which he attempts to plead for evil or excuse it.

On the whole, the best directory for conscience is an enlightened acquaintance with the Scriptures, and the possession of a spiritual state of mind. Where these exist, difficulties respecting conduct will not be found in any great degree, or be of long continuance. God has engaged to make the path of duty plain to him who desires to be found in it, and such will always experience the divine faithfulness and goodness. It is impossible to construct nicer balances than those of the sanctuary; or to form better weights and measures for them, than those which God himself has provided. When truth must be dealt out in drams and scruples, or the state of the conscience ascertained by a theological barometer, the health of the soul must be in a very crazy or feeble condition. The cure in such a case must be found, not in a "scruple shop," or in a dispensation office, but in a resolute and persevering application to the great Physician, and the proper use of his heavenly remedies. Where these fail, or are neglected, neither a Ductor Dubitantium nor a Christian Directory will render essential service.[i]

I purposely began this chapter on Christian ethics, with Baxter's 'Directory,' because, though not the first of his works on the great duties of man, as it embraces the whole range it was properly entitled to priority of consideration. The work to which I am now about to advert, is less in bulk, but greater in value, and has rendered the highest services to the cause of Christianity. I refer to his

'Gildas Salvianus: The Reformed Pastor; showing the nature of the pastoral work; especially in private instruction and catechising: with an open confession of our too open sins. Prepared for a day of humiliation, kept at Worcester, Dec. 4th, 1655, by the ministers of that county who subscribed the agreement for catechising, and personal instruction, at their entrance

(i) An 'Abridgement of the Christian Directory,' in two volumes 8vo, was published in 1804, by Dr. Adam Clarke. The only mode of abridging such a book, is reducing its bulk, by leaving out large portions of it. Baxter, I apprehend, would not have smiled at the various attempts which have been made to contract his dimensions.

upon that work.'[j] The title which I have here quoted, presents at once to the reader, the nature and design of this important treatise. Baxter was eminently qualified to write on the nature and design of the ministerial office. He had now occupied it for a sufficient number of years, to enable him to speak from his own experience. But independently of this, the manner in which he had discharged the duties of the office at Kidderminster, and the extraordinary success with which it had pleased God to bless his labors, pointed him out to his brethren as the proper person to deliver to them, not an *ex cathedra* oration, or a formal *concio ad cleros*, but a pious, earnest, and solemn homily on the onerous duties and responsibilities of the pastoral function.

The manner in which he fulfilled his duties in the church, of which the Holy Ghost had made him overseer, we have already seen in his own beautiful account of the causes and means of his success. The volume now before us unfolds the principles by which he was actuated in the discharge of his ministry, and the means by which he endeavored to make full proof of it. He was himself, allowing for human imperfections, the pastor which he describes, the minister whose portrait he sketches:

> "Whose own example strengthens all his laws,
> And is himself the great sublime he draws."[k]

It is therefore no fanciful sketch, or beau ideal of a character, unattainable by mortals, but the representation of a living reality. This gives it a force and recommendation which it would not otherwise have; and is calculated to meet one of the strongest objections which naturally occur to the mind of every attentive reader. He is disposed at once to ask the question, Can these things be? Can such ardor, such spiritual devotedness, such untiring labor, such unwearied patience, so much wisdom, discrimination, faithfulness, and meekness, be attained? If all these are required to the due fulfilment of the pastor's weighty charge, who is sufficient for these things? The effect of such considerations on some minds, has been most depressing and discouraging, inducing doubts as to whether they have really been called to the work of the ministry, or ought not to abandon it.

Richard Baxter, though possessed of vast natural energy and enterprise, was after all but a man of like passions with others. He was sickly, and feeble in body, and had his own peculiarities of mind; but the grace of Christ wrought mightily in him, and rendered him capable of great things. What he effected was more by the force of principle, and by the diligent and persevering use of divinely-appointed means, than by his extraordinary natural talents. "He studied to show himself a workman

(j) Works, vol. xv. (k) Pope, of Longinus.

approved of God." He gave himself to reading, to meditation, and prayer; and was wholly in these things. This continued and unreserved devotedness is the grand feature in Baxter's ministerial character, and that which accounts for much that he accomplished at Kidderminster.

To describe minutely such a work as the 'Reformed Pastor,' cannot be necessary; and no description could do full justice to its merits. Gildas and Salvianus, whose names are placed first on his title-page, were two writers of the fifth and sixth centuries, distinguished for their bold and faithful warnings. Baxter says, "I pretend not to the sapience of *Gildas*, nor to the sanctity of *Salvian*, as to the degree; but by their names I offer an excuse for plain dealing. If it was used in a much greater measure by men so wise and holy as these, why should it, in a lower measure, be disallowed in another? At least, from hence I have this encouragement, that the plain dealing of Gildas and Salvian being so much approved by us now they are dead, how much soever they might be despised or hated while they were living, by them whom they did reprove, at the worst I may expect some such success in times to come."[k]

His expectation has been more than fulfilled; scarcely any of his books having been more extensively read, or more generally useful than this. Prefixed to it is an address, of considerable length, to his reverend and dearly beloved brethren, the faithful ministers of Christ, in Great Britain and Ireland; full of tenderness and simple fidelity. There is next a short address to the lay reader, in which he speaks of an intention to write a second part of the work, treating more fully of the duties of the people, and their relations to the pastors; but which, I believe, he never executed. The discourse itself is appropriately founded on Acts xx. 28. He first opens or expounds the meaning of the text, and then enters fully into his great subject; which he divides into seven chapters. In these he enters into a full detail of all that is included in the oversight of the flock, the duties necessary to be performed, the manner in which they must be discharged, the actuating motives productive of obedience, the sins of the ministry, the encouragements provided for the faithful, and the threatenings addressed to the ignorant, indolent, or ungodly.

On a few leading points Baxter lays great stress, and where they are attended to, much benefit will invariably accrue. Awakening preaching, holy example, diligent inspection, with catechising, and the faithful administration of discipline. On these points he dwells and enlarges, and they were all strikingly illustrated in his own example. There was a cutting edge in his preaching, which could scarcely be withstood. His own

(k) Works, Preface, p. xvii.

character added all the force of example to his expostulations, reproofs, and injunctions. He was constantly among the people; acquainted with the old and the young; familiar with their characters and circumstances; and prepared to take advantage of every occurrence which might promote their eternal welfare. His discipline followed up his warnings and denunciations; and, fearless of any consequences, he administered it with all fidelity and impartiality.

Such a plan and mode of acting could not fail to produce, and they did produce, surprising and lasting effects. There is an obvious adaptation in them to promote the great ends which Christ has in view in the institution of the Christian ministry. Something must no doubt depend on natural as well as moral qualifications, and on advantageous or disadvantageous circumstances. But where there is an ordinary measure of fitness for the work, if such measures as these are diligently and perseveringly prosecuted, the effect will most amply repay the labor. Christain zeal, fidelity, and tenderness, can never be employed in vain.

There is one effect which such a system as Baxter recommends is calculated to produce, and must therefore be watched with great attention. It has a direct tendency to produce profession and hypocrisy, if the love of the truth itself does not take possession of the soul. Baxter, though he could not be satisfied with the mere adoption of the form of religion, yet laid considerable stress on it; and felt as if he had gained a step, when men were induced to comply with certain external ordinances, though they were not converted. The observance of the Sabbath, of family worship, of the Lord's-supper, are all highly important in themselves; yet men may be persuaded to do all these things, who are strangers to the life and power of godliness. When religion comes to be generally respected in a place, or when it is powerfully recommended by certain adventitious circumstances, many will assume the profession, and mistake outward conformity for inward and genuine piety.

The system of Baxter could also be more fully acted upon, while he was minister of the parish of Kidderminster, as circumstances then were, than it could afterwards have been, had he remained in the established church; or than he could have adopted as the minister of a separate congregation, had he taken such a charge. While in Kidderminster, he enjoyed all the advantages both of the church and dissent. He was the minister of a voluntary congregation, and of a separated Christian society, meeting in the parochial edifice, and supported by the funds of the establishment. He had all the consequence and influence of a clergyman, with all the privileges and independence of a dissenting minister. No clergyman dare now act in the same manner

with Baxter; and no dissenting minister can do all that he did: much more, however, might perhaps be done by both, than is generally attempted. He concludes his book with the following very beautiful appeal to his brethren, and reference to the great Author of all good for his blessing.

"I have done my advice, and leave you to the practice. Though the proud may receive it with scorn, and the selfish and slothful with some distaste and indignation, I doubt not but God will use it, in despite of the oppositions of sin and Satan, to the awakening of many of his servants to their duty, and promoting the work of a right reformation: and that his much greater blessing shall accompany the present undertaking for the saving of many a soul, the peace of you that undertake and perform it, the exciting of his servants through the nation to second you, and to increase purity and the unity of his churches."[l]

A very good abridgement of 'The Reformed Pastor' was executed many years ago by the late Rev. Samuel Palmer, of Hackney; the circulation of it has been very extensive. A much improved revision and abridgement of the work, by the Rev. Dr. Brown, of Edinburgh, with an admirable introductory essay by the Rev. Daniel Wilson, has been recently published by Collins, of Glasgow. Both the abridgement and the essay are in all respects worthy of Baxter, and deserving of the widest diffusion.

When he published the treatise, he expressed his confidence that the divine blessing would attend it. Long before he died, he said with great satisfaction respecting the book, but with great sorrow in reference to the times, "I have very great cause to be thankful to God for the success of that book, as hoping many thousand souls are the better for it, in that it prevailed with many ministers to set upon that work which I there exhort them to: even from beyond the seas, I have had letters of request, to direct them how they might bring on that work according as that book had convinced them that it was their duty. If God would but reform the ministry, and set them on their duties zealously and faithfully, the people would certainly be reformed: all churches either rise or fall, as the ministry doth rise or fall; not in riches and worldly grandeur, but in knowledge, zeal, and ability for the work. But since bishops were restored, this book is useless, and that work not meddled with."[m]

I shall conclude my account of this invaluable book, by requesting the attention of my brethren in the ministry, who may happen to glance at these pages, to the following testimony of Dr. Doddridge: "'The Reformed Pastor' is a most extraordinary performance, and should be read by every young minister before

(l) Works, vol. xiv. p. 354. (m) Life, part i. p. 115.

he takes a people under his stated care; and, I think, the practical part of it reviewed every three or four years. For nothing would have a greater tendency to awaken the spirit of a minister to that zeal in his work, for want of which, many good men are but shadows of what, by the blessing of God they might be, if the maxims and measures laid down in this incomparable treatise were strenuously pursued." [n]

With 'The Reformed Pastor' may be connected, with great propriety, one of Baxter's tracts, though it was published in 1676, 'Reasons for Ministers using the greatest plainness and seriousness possible in all their applications to their people.' [o] It occupies only a few pages; but is full of the most solemn and serious statements, appealing at once to ministers and people. To the former to induce fidelity, and to the latter to encourage submission to its exercise.

The mind of Baxter could embrace the most sublime and the most abstruse subjects; it could also descend and accommodate itself to the simplest and rudest elements of knowledge. Like Watts, he could reason with philosophers, and become the instructer of children. Families were the object of his great attention and solicitude while he ministered at Kidderminster; and the poorest as well as the richest enjoyed his labors. In no capacity does he appear to more advantage than as the author of 'The Poor Man's Family Book.' [p] This is, in fact, a compendium of divinity and religion, communicated in a familiar conference between a teacher and a hearer, extending over eight days, and comprehending a form of exhortation to the sick; two catechisms; a profession of Christianity; forms of prayer for various occasions, and psalms and hymns for the Lord's day. He states the design of the book; and appeals so affectingly to the rich, to assist him in circulating it among the poor, that I cannot do better than allow him to speak for himself.

"This book was intended for the use of poor families, which have neither money to buy many books, nor time to read them: I much desired, therefore, to have made it shorter; but I could not do it without leaving out that which I think they cannot well spare. That which is spoken accurately, and in few words, the ignorant understand not: and that which is large, they have neither money, leisure, nor memory, to make their own. Being unavoidably in this strait, the first remedy lieth in your hands; I humbly propose it to you, for the souls of men, and the comfort of your own, and the common good on the behalf of Christ the Saviour of your souls and theirs, that you will bestow one book (either this or some fitter) upon as many poor families as you well can. If every landlord would give one to every poor tenant

(n) Doddridge's 'Lectures on Preaching and the Pastoral Care.'
(o) Works, vol. xv. (p) Works, vol. xix.

that he hath, once in his life, out of one year's rent, it would be no great charge, in comparison of the benefit which may be hoped for, and in comparison of what prodigality consumeth. The price of one ordinary dish of meat will buy a book: and to abate, for every tenant, but one dish in your lives, is no great self-denial. If you, indeed, lay out all that you have better, I have done. If not, grudge not this little to the poor and to yourselves: it will be more comfortable to your review, when the reckoning cometh, than that which is spent on pomp and ceremony, and superfluities, and fleshly pleasures. And if landlords (whose power with their tenants is usually great) would also require them seriously to read it, (at least on the Lord's day,) it may further the success. And I hope rich citizens, and ladies and rich women, who cannot themselves go to talk to poor families, will send them such a messenger as this, or some fitter book to instruct them, seeing no preacher can be got at so cheap a rate. The Father of spirits, and the Redeemer of souls, persuade and assist us all to work while it is day, and serve his love and grace for our own, and other men's salvation." [p]

The whole work is conducted in the form of a dialogue, which is maintained with great vigor by the various interlocutors. The style is familiar and easy, but not vulgar. While every sentiment is made as intelligible as possible to the poor, there is much to please, and scarcely any thing to offend a person of the most delicate taste. Baxter could distinguish, which is not always done, between plainness and home dealing, and what is low and vulgar. He made it his object to elevate the minds of the poor, without degrading the ministry, or injuring the pure and sublime doctrines of the cross. In this book we have of course no learned quotations, but few of his nice distinctions, and none of his technical words and phrases. It is pure good English writing. The prayer at the end of the book, of a dying believer, is exquisitely beautiful. It may be poured out in a cottage; it might be uttered in a palace. It is the breathing of heaven, and the earnest of its enjoyment.

This little work met with great acceptance when it was first published. It appears to have been given away in great numbers by the author himself, as well as by benevolent individuals who approved of this method of promoting religion. The effects produced by such means are rarely known in this world. The extent to which the poor and the afflicted are relieved by books and tracts, will only be ascertained when the world, the scene of their dispersion, has passed away. The following anecdote of the origin of the dissenting congregation at Daventry will perhaps interest the reader, in connexion with the 'Poor Man's Family Book:'

(p) Works, vol. xix. p. 295.

Nonconformity took early root in this parish. After the Bartholomew Act, in 1662, secret meetings for worship were frequently held late at night, and conducted only occasionally by ministers, at a house in the hamlet of Drayton, in which was a back-door opening into the fields, to facilitate retreat in case of detection—no unnecessary precaution in those days of persecution.

The immediate rise of the present congregation is thus related by Dr. Ashworth, as communicated to him about the year 1747, by Mr. Thomas Porter, one of the members then upwards of eighty years of age: "An aged minister, who lived some considerable distance beyond Daventry, in his way to London, lay at the Swan Inn (formerly the principal inn) in this town, where he was taken ill, and confined for a week or longer. Mr. Lindsay, who kept the house, and all his family, behaved to him with much kindness; and it appears to have been a remarkably regular house. The minister, on the evening before he departed, desired the family to come into his room, where he particularly thanked Mr. Lindsay, and each of his family, for their civility to him, and expressed much satisfaction in the good of the house; but, said he, something leads me think that there is not the fear of God in this house. It grieves me to see such honesty, civility, economy, and decency, and yet religion is wanting, which is the one thing needful. On this, he entered into a close conversation with them on the nature and importance of real and inward religion, which he closed with telling them, he had with him a little book, lately printed, which he would give them, and wished them to read it carefully. On which he gave them Baxter's 'Poor Man's Family Book.' This fixes the date to 1672, or later, the year in which that book was printed. It is not certain who the minister was, or that Mr. Lindsay ever saw him again, or knew his name; but it was suspected that it was Baxter himself. Mr. Lindsay read the book with pleasure, sent for others of Mr. Baxter's books, and he and some of his children became excellent characters. Upon this he grew weary of the inn, and being in plentiful circumstances, retired to a house in the middle of the High Street, which had a small close behind it; at the extremity of which, upon the back lane (opposite the inlands), there stood some out buildings, which he converted into a meeting-house. This was probably after the Revolution. He always intended, and often promised, to settle it in form; but, dying suddenly, it never was done." [q]

Encouraged by the reception and success of his Poor Man's Book, Baxter published, in 1682, what he considered a second part of it, 'The Catechising of Families,' in which he proposes

(q) Baker's 'Northamptonshire,' quoted in the 'Eclectic Review' for September, 1828.

to instruct householders how to teach their households; and also to afford assistance to schoolmasters and teachers of youth: "expounding," he says, "First, The law of nature; Secondly, The evidence of the Gospel; Thirdly, The Creed; Fourthly, The Lord's Prayer: Fifthly, The Commandments; Sixthly, The Ministry; Seventhly, Baptism; Eighthly, The Lord's Supper. It is suited to those that are past the common little catechism; and I think these two family books to be of the greatest common use of any that I have published. If households would but do their parts in reading good books to their households, it might be a great supply where the ministry is defective; and no ministry will serve sufficiently without man's own endeavors for themselves and families."[r]

In his estimate of this and his former work, he was by no means mistaken. They are both admirably adapted for usefulness among the class of persons for which they were chiefly designed. They contain a large portion of theological instruction, conveyed with much simplicity, and often in a very impressive manner. In informing the understanding, Baxter never loses sight of the heart. He is constantly preparing or directing some arrow, which, by the blessing of God, may be lodged in some breast, thus causing conviction of sin, and leading to the righteousness which is by faith. Both the Family Book and the Catechism are fitted for other families besides the poor. There is little to offend any class of society, and much that might instruct and profit the young, even in the highest walks of life.

Baxter was the author of another catechism still. It appeared after his death; being edited by Sylvester in 1701, with the humble title of 'The Mother's Catechism; or a familiar way of catechising children in the knowledge of God, themselves, and the Holy Scriptures.'[s] Though it is called a catechism, it is rather a familiar dialogue between a mother and her child, beginning with the first principles or elements of knowledge, and proceeding to some of its more advanced stages. A considerable part of it, is very good, but is beyond the capacity of a very young child, for which it was principally intended as a preparation for the next catechism. It shows, however, that Baxter could cease to be metaphysical, and that he could accommodate himself to the simplest understanding, when he set himself to that kind of work. It is only to be regretted that he sometimes forgot "men are but children of a larger growth," and consequently adopted a style of instructing them too artificial, and more calculated to show the powers of the teacher, than to promote the benefit of the taught.

(r) Life, part iii. p. 191.

(s) Works, vol. xviii.

With these publications, intended chiefly for the good of the poor, may with propriety be connected the sheets or tracts which he published for their benefit, though they have now entirely disappeared. He printed and circulated, in the year 1665, two sheets for the instruction of poor families, and one of instruction for the sick in the time of the plague. It is very evident, both from what he wrote, and from the practice which he pursued, that he was a great advocate for the circulation of religious tracts. He spent a considerable portion of the profits of his own works in this way. The following account of these tracts will show how little there is of novelty in modern plans of usefulness.

"When the grievous plague began at London, I printed a half sheet, to stick on a wall, for the use of the ignorant and ungodly, who were sick, or in danger of the sickness; for the godly I thought had less need, and would read those larger books which are plentiful among us. And I the rather did it because many well-minded people who are about the sick, that are ignorant and unprepared, and know not what to say to them, may not only read so short a paper to them, but see there in what method such persons are to be dealt with, in such a case of extremity, that they may themselves enlarge as they see cause.

"At that time, Mr. Nathaniel Lane wrote to me to intreat me to write one sheet or two for the use of poor families, which will not buy or read any bigger books. Though I knew that brevity would unavoidably cause me to leave out much necessary matter, or else to write in a style so concise and close as will be little moving to any but close judicious readers, yet I yielded to his persuasions, and thought it might be better than nothing, and might be read by many that would read no larger, and so I wrote two sheets for poor families: the first containing the method and motives for the conversion of the ungodly; the second containing the description or character of a true Christian, or the necessary parts of Christian duty, for the direction of beginners in a godly life. These three last sheets were printed by the favor of the archbishop's chaplain, when the Bishop of London's chaplain had put me out of hope of printing any more."[t]

From catechising children, we must follow Baxter, in this department of his ministry, to other classes of persons. He published a sheet in 1657, of 'Directions to Justices of the Peace, especially in Corporations, for the Discharge of their Duty to God.'[u] This tract will not be supposed of the same nature with a legal directory. In fact, it does not meddle with

(t) Life, part i. pp. 121, 122. (u) Works, vol. xv.

the law at all, but contains some very good general rules, calculated to assist in the administration of justice, or to suggest to the persons occupying this place important means of doing good. It was written at the request of Mr. William Mountford, bailiff of Kidderminster, "who requested me," he says, "to write him down a few brief instructions for the due execution of his office of magistracy; which having done, considering how many mayors, and bailiffs, and country justices, needed it as well as he, I printed it upon an open sheet, to stick upon a wall."[x] The tract shows the different state of things which must then have obtained in the country from any with which we are acquainted now. Baxter assumes that the justices begin with hearing the word of God, and fasting and prayer; and that they are resolved to do the will of God. Would that such were the condition of society at present, that we might take it for granted religious principles influenced generally the magistracy of the land! He found it necessary even then, however, to recommend the discouragement or suppression of unnecessary ale-houses, the punishment of drunkards and swearers, &c. As a tract, these directions might still be circulated, perhaps, to some advantage.

Another class of persons engaged the attention of the indefatigable servant of Christ—the merchants and citizens of London. He published, in 1682, 'How to do Good to Many; or, the Public Good the Christian's Life: with Directions and Motives to it.'[y] In a dedication to the 'Truly Christian Merchants and Citizens of London,' he refers to the circumstances in which this sermon, or rather treatise, was prepared, and addresses them with great affection.

"What doctrine it was that I last prepared for you, I thought meet to desire the press thus to tell you: not to vindicate myself, nor to characterize them who think that it deserves six months' imprisonment, but to be in your hands a provocation and direction for that great work of a Christian life, which, sincerely done, will prepare you for that safety, joy, and glory, which London, England, or earth, will not afford, and which men or devils cannot take from you: when, through the meritorious righteousness of Christ, your holy love and good works to him, in his brethren, shall make you the joyful objects of that sentence, 'Come, ye blessed, inherit the kingdom,' &c. This is the life that needeth not to be repented of, as spent in vain. Dear friends, in this farewell I return you my most hearty thanks for your extraordinary love and kindness to myself, much more for your love to Christ, and to his servants, who have more

(x) Life, part i. p. 117. I apprehend our Tract Society has not yet thought of adapting its single sheets to this class of persons.
(y) Works, vol. xvii.

needed your relief. God is not unjust to forget your work and labor of love. You have visited those that others imprisoned, and fed those that others brought into want; and when some ceased not to preach for our affliction, it quenched not your impartial charity. It has been an unspeakable mercy unto me, almost all my days (when I received nothing from them), to have known so great a number as I have done, of serious, humble, holy, charitable Christians, in whom I saw that Christ hath an elect, peculiar people, quite different from the brutish, proud, hypocritical, malignant, unbelieving world. O how sweet hath the familiarity of such been to me, whom the ignorant world hath hated! Most of them are gone to Christ: I am following. We leave you here to longer trial. It is like you have a bitter cup to drink, but be faithful to the death, and Christ will give you the crown of life. The word of God is not bound, and the Jerusalem above is free, where is the general assembly of the first-born, an innumerable company of angels, the spirits of the just made perfect, with Christ their glorified head. The Lord guide, bless, and preserve you." [z]

The great object of the discourse is to point out a variety of methods of doing good, which may be adopted by persons of affluence. It is full of sound practical wisdom, and shows that Baxter's mind could, even under all the depressing circumstances of the country, take an enlarged and enlightened view of that benevolence which ought to be a leading feature in the character of every Christian. The publication of books and tracts, the printing and circulation of the Scriptures, the sending forth of missionaries, were among the plans of usefulness which he proposed. The following short paragraph will show that the germs of Bible, missionary, and tract societies were all in the mind of this most energetic and enlightened man.

"Is it not possible, at least, to help the poor ignorant Armenians, Greeks, Muscovites, and other Christians, who have no printing among them, nor much preaching and knowledge; and, for want of printing, have very few Bibles, even for their churches or ministers? Could nothing be done to get some Bibles, catechisms, and practical books, printed in their own tongues, and given among them? I know there is difficulty in the way; but money, and willingness, and diligence, might do something. Might not something be done in other plantations as well as in New England, towards the conversion of the natives there? Might not some skilful, zealous preachers be sent thither, who would promote serious piety among those of the English that have too little of it, and might invite the Americans to learn the Gospel, and teach our planters how to behave themselves christianly towards them, to win them to Christ." [a]

(z) Works, vol. xvii. pp. 289, 290.

(a) Ibid. vol. xvii. p. 330.

A third class of persons occupied his attention, and engaged his exertions. He published, in the same year with the preceding, 'Compassionate Counsel to all Young Men; especially London Apprentices; Students of Divinity, Physic, and Law; and the Sons of Magistrates and Rich Men.' [b] This little work is distinguished by the great affection and faithfulness which are combined in its pages. It contains the most affectionate counsels and warnings to youth, in whom he was so deeply interested. His success in Kidderminster, and his experience afterwards, led him to this work. [c]

"In the place," he says, "where God most blessed my labors, at Kidderminster, in Worcestershire, my first and greatest success was upon the youth; and, which was a marvellous way of divine mercy, when God had touched the hearts of young men and girls with a love of goodness, and delightful obedience to the truth, the parents and grandfathers, who had grown old in an ignorant, worldly state, did many of them fall into a liking and love of piety, induced by the love of their children, whom they perceived to be made by it much wiser, and better, and more dutiful to them. God, by his unexpected, disposing providence, having now for twenty years placed me in and near London, where, in a variety of places and conditions (sometimes under restraint by men, and sometimes at more liberty), I have preached but as to strangers, in other men's pulpits, as I could, and not to any special flock of mine; I have been less capable of judging of my success; but, by much experience, I have been made more sensible of the necessity of warning and instructing youth than I was before. The sad reports of fame have taught it to me; the sad complaints of mournful parents have taught it me; the sad observation of the wilful impenitence of some of my acquaintance tells it me; the many scores, if not hundreds, of bills that have been publicly put up to me to pray for wicked and obstinate children, have told it me; and, by the grace of God, the penitent confessions, lamentations, and restitutions of many converts, have more particularly acquainted me with their case; which moved me, on my Thursday's lecture, awhile to design, the first of every month, to speak to youth, and those that educate them." [d]

The last work which comes properly under the present head is, 'The Divine Appointment of the Lord's Day Proved, as a Separated Day for Holy Worship; especially in the Church Assemblies; and, consequently, the cessation of the Seventh-Day Sabbath.' 8vo. 1671. [e]

(b) Works, vol. xv.

(c) He tells us in his life, that Sir Robert Atkins contributed to the expense of printing it; and that he gave away in the city and country fifteen hundred copies, beside what were sold by the booksellers.—Part iii. p. 190.

(d) Works, vol. xv. pp. 299, 300.

(e) Ibid. vol. xiii.

The subject discussed in this volume is one of vital importance to the interests of morality, and of practical religion. The manner in which the Sabbath is observed may justly be considered as the pulse or index of religion, which shows whether it is in a healthy or diseased state, either in communities or individuals. It will be found to consist with general experience, that, as the duties and privileges of this sacred day are conscientiously or carelessly regarded, true religion will prosper or decline. On these accounts, not only theological, but moral writers, have considered the subject of the Sabbath one of the very first importance, in treatises embracing the duties of religion.

A considerable diversity of opinion, however, has prevailed respecting the grounds on which the entire consecration of the first day of the week to holy purposes properly rests. Little is directly said on this subject in the New Testament, much therefore depends on inferential reasoning. The references to the subject in the early Christian writers, are far from satisfactory. It appears clearly enough, that Christians met on that day for public worship; but not so clearly that they consecrated the whole day to God. Few, if any of the Reformers, British or Continental, held the divine obligation of the first day of the week. Calvin and Cranmer, Luther and Melancthon, all agreed in regarding it as the appointment or free choice of the church, rather than the positive appointment of God.[f] The English Puritans at an early period endeavored to place its obligation on the high ground of divine appointment; and from that period to the present time, a controversy on the subject has been more or less continually agitated.

While the first day of the week was thus matter of debate, another question was introduced by some, whether the obligation of the *seventh* day had really ceased; and that it had not, a few persons contended with considerable zeal, and some show of argument. This view of the subject appears to have arisen chiefly from two causes: many of the opposers of infant baptism, having been led to maintain that all positive institutions of religion, must have for their foundation a positive divine command; and finding such a command to observe the seventh, but no such command respecting the first day of the week, to be consistent, they gave up the Christian Sabbath, as they had given up infant baptism. I believe the Sabbatarians, as they have since been called, have generally been Baptists. But this was not the only source of the sentiment now adverted to. Many of the Puritans,

(f) The reader may consult, on this subject, the 'Augustan Confession,' sect. 16, 'Helvetian Confession,' cap. 24. 'Calvin. Institut.' lib. ii. cap. 8. sect. 34. The works of Frith, Tindal, Barnes, and Cranmer, show that the English Reformers were of the same opinion—that the Sabbath was a *holiday* appointed by the church.

in discussing the subject of the Lord's Day, resting the strength of their argument on the moral obligation of the fourth commandment, contended in fact for the observance of the first day of the week on the principles of Judaism. This drove some men, such as Milton, to maintain that the Sabbath had entirely ceased.

From the operation of these and other causes, there had been a great deal of controversy respecting the Sabbath, before Baxter wrote this treatise. His object in it is twofold; to correct those who regarded the Lord's Day as a kind of Jewish sabbath; and to confute those again who either maintained the abrogation of a day of sacred rest altogether or contended for the continued obligation of the Jewish sabbath. He had therefore to meet the high-church men, who looked on the Sabbath merely as a holiday; such as White, Heylin, and Ironside; and those of the Puritans who confounded it with the Mosaic system, such as Bound, Cawdry, and Palmer; with those who were for setting aside the first day of the week entirely.

I consider this one of the most judicious of Baxter's works. It judiciously combines controversial and practical discussion, both of which are managed with great fairness, and display great accuracy of scriptural knowledge. The ground he takes is stated in the following series of propositions, which he afterwards proceeds to establish and illustrate.

The first proposition is, 'That Christ commissioned his apostles, as his principal church ministers, to teach the churches all his doctrine, and deliver them all his commands and orders, and so to settle and guide the first churches.' The second proposition is, 'That Christ promised his Spirit accordingly to his apostles, to enable them to do what he had commissioned them to do, by leading them into all truth, and bringing his words and deeds to their remembrance, and by guiding them as his church's guides.' The third proposition is, 'That Christ performed this promise, and gave his Spirit accordingly to his apostles, to enable them to do all their commissioned work. The fourth proposition is, 'That the apostles did actually separate or appoint the first day of the week for holy worship, especially in church assemblies.' The fifth proposition is, 'That this act of theirs was done by the guidance or inspiration of the Holy Ghost, which was given them.'

"When I have distinctly proved these five things, no sober, understanding Christian can expect that I should do any more, towards the proof of the question in hand, whether the first day of the week be separated by God's institution for holy worship, especially in church assemblies."[g]

(g) Works, vol. xiii. p. 371. There is only another writer of the same period

I am fully satisfied, that the ground here taken is the only scriptural and satisfactory ground of the divine obligation of this sacred day. It places it correctly on the footing of a New-Testament ordinance; while it does not deprive it of all that support from the analogy of the original appointment of a day of rest, and of the Mosaical institution, which it may properly have. Unless we reason from the recorded example of the apostles and primitive Christians, and regard that example as not less binding than apostolic precept, we shall find very little authority for most of the ordinances of Christianity.

"I much pity and wonder," says Baxter, "at those godly men who are so much for stretching the words of Scripture to a sense that other men cannot find in them; as that in the word *graven images*, in the second commandment, they can find all set forms of prayer, all composed studied sermons, and all things about worship of man's invention, to be images or idolatry; and yet they cannot find the abrogation of the Jewish Sabbath in the express words of Col. ii. 16, nor the other texts which I have cited; nor can they find the institution of the Lord's Day in all the texts and evidences produced for it." [h]

In the course of this treatise, Baxter gives a singular account of the way in which the observance of the Sabbath was attended to in his early days. It is an admirable illustration of the Book of Sports, the production of the far-famed wisdom of James I., and sanctioned by his son Charles.

"I cannot forget," he says, "that in my youth, in those late times, when we lost the labors of some of our conformable godly teachers for not reading publicly the book of sports and dancing on the Lord's Day, one of my father's own tenants was the town piper, hired by the year (for many years together,) and the place of the dancing assembly was not an hundred yards from our door. We could not, on the Lord's Day, either read a chapter, or pray, or sing a psalm, or catechise or instruct a servant, but with the noise of the pipe and tabor, and the shoutings in the street continually in our ears. Even among a tractable people, we were the common scorn of all the rabble in the streets, and called puritans, precisians, and hypocrites, because we rather chose to read the Scriptures, than to do as they did; though there was no savour of nonconformity in our family. And when the people by the book were allowed to play and dance out of public service time, they could so hardly break off their sports, that many a time the reader was fain to stay till the piper and players would give over. Sometimes the

with Baxter, known to me, who takes the same view of the subject, and almost the same ground—'Warren's Jew's Sabbath Antiquated, and the Lord's Day Instituted by Divine Authority.' 1659. 4to. It is a very able treatise.

(h) Ibid. p. 367.

morris-dancers would come into the church in all their linen, and scarfs, and antic-dresses, with morris-bells jingling at their legs; and as soon as common prayer was read, did haste out presently to their play again." [h]

Greatly as the Sabbath is still neglected or profaned among us, it ought to afford sincere satisfaction that such scenes as the above could not now be transacted in any part of England. Much, however, still remains to be done, before the divine obligation of the Lord's Day will be generally acknowledged and respected in this Christian country. Had the views of the reformers on this subject been more correct, greater progress would doubtless have been made, as their sentiments would have had an influence on some of the legal enactments of the country. Little can now be done, except by the operation of Christian principle and example on the public habits and manners of the people. As genuine Christians increase, and their power comes to be more exerted, many evils, and among these the profanation of the Sabbath, will be gradually abated, and ultimately abolished.

We have now gone over the various ethical writings of Baxter. How extensively he entered into this department, and how ably he treated it, must be apparent even from this imperfect review. No class of persons, no description of duty, escaped the vigilance of his attention. Unfettered by any peculiarities of his theological system, he made it his business to stir up all men to a sense of their duty to God and others. Whatever the Law-maker enjoined, he considered himself bound to enforce, regardless of all the excuses which men plead, and the apologies which they offer for any act of disobedience. He never thought of allowing moral impotence, that is, indisposition to do the will of God, as a reason for noncompliance. On the contrary, he made use of this very indisposition as a reason why men should repent, and seek for strength where alone it is to be found. If evangelical motives do not always occupy a conspicuous place in this class of his writings, it is not because he wished to keep them out of view, but because he either took it for granted that they were understood, or considered it important to give prominence to certain other topics, which preachers of the Gospel are sometimes in danger of overlooking. Take his writings of this class as a whole, they are exceedingly valuable, and furnish a most complete answer to all who would charge those who preach the truth, as it is in Jesus, with indifference, or inattention to the claims of morality. No man contended more strenuously than Baxter for the preaching of Jesus, as a Saviour; and no man more zealously preached him as Christ, THE LORD.

(h) Works, vol. xiii. p. 444.

CHAPTER VI.

WORKS ON CATHOLIC COMMUNION.

Unity of the Early Christians—Causes of Separation—Means of Re-Union—Sentiments of Hall on this Subject—Baxter, the Originator, in Modern Times, of the true Principle of Catholic Communion—His various Labors to promote it—'Christian Concord'—Church Communion at Kidderminster—'Agreement of Ministers in Worcestershire'—'Disputations of Right to the Sacraments'—Sir William Morice—'Confirmation and Restauration'—'Disputations on Church Government'—Dedicated to Richard Cromwell—'Judgment concerning Mr. Dury'—Some Account of Dury—'Universal Concord'—Baxter's Efforts in promoting Union retarded by the Restoration—'Catholic Unity'—'True Catholic and Catholic Church'—'Cure of Church Divisions'—Controversy with Bagshaw—'Defence of the Principles of Love'—'Second Admonition to Bagshaw'—'Church told of Bagshaw's Scandal'—Further Account of Bagshaw—'True and only Way of Concord'—'Catholic Communion Defended,' in Five Parts—'Judgment of Sir Matthew Hale'—'Baxter's Sense of the Subscribed Articles'—'Church Concord'—'Of National Churches'—'Moral Prognostication'—Summary View of Baxter's Sentiments on Catholic Communion and Church Government.

When the kingdom of heaven was first set up among men, there was only one name by which its subjects were designated, but one authority to which they all bowed, and one fellowship to which they all belonged. A primitive Christian could have formed no idea of the character of a person, or the kind of treatment to which he was entitled, whom he was called to recognise as a believer, but with whom he must not have communion in the most sacred ordinance of the Gospel. There were differences of opinion and practice then as well as now, but such a thing as I have adverted to could neither have been understood nor practised. Had Christianity been left to maintain and extend itself in the world by its own unaided power, and its own scriptural means, it is probable that this state of things would have continued. But when it was thought necessary to define it more accurately than God himself had done; to require men to submit to human expositions of the faith, rather than to the faith itself; and to employ coercive measures to preserve and enforce uniformity of opinion and practice, the glorious unity of the church of Christ was invaded and destroyed by the very means devised to preserve it.

The wretched state of division which still subsists in the Christian church, is chiefly owing to the continuance of these causes. Terms of communion, entirely of human framing, continue to enclose and hedge up the several parties into which the Christian world is divided, and to keep them separate from

one another. God is not sufficiently trusted to take care of his own cause, and to preserve his kingdom from ruin. Man must devise his schemes of preservation and enlargement, must interpose the use of his power and the dictum of his authority to maintain unity and peace. In the mean time, all is weakness, alienation, and anarchy.

It can scarcely be doubted, that if Christians acted more according to their own feelings, and less under the influence of authority, custom, or interest, a different state of things would soon appear. Did they consult the Scriptures more, and human opinion less; were it their sole object to ascertain facts and principles as the groundwork of their own obedience, instead of looking for the confirmation of hypotheses, or for arguments to justify received systems; and did they, in connexion with this conduct, determine to hold fellowship with all whom they could regard as holding the same Head, substantial unity in the church of Christ would soon be again restored. But if men will give up nothing that they have been taught by tradition or authority to receive; if a difference of opinion on some of the five points is deemed incompatible with the acknowledgement of the Christian character; if the ministry of a servant of Christ is considered invalid, unless he has received it from episcopal or presbyterian hands; if Christian communion is made dependent on submission to a particular form of baptism, or a particular mode of observing the Lord's supper; if all churches must be regarded as sectarian and schismatical which are not established by human laws; then, while these things are thus viewed and maintained, it would be absurd to look for love and union among the followers of Christ.

"If we consult the Scriptures," says an eloquent writer, "we shall be at no loss to perceive that the unity of the church is not merely a doctrine most clearly revealed, but that its practical exemplification is one of the principal designs of the Christian dispensation. We are expressly told that our Saviour purposed by his death, to 'gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad,' and for the accomplishment of this design, he interceded during his last moments, in language which instructs us to consider it as the grand means of the conversion of the world. His prophetic anticipations were not disappointed; for while a visible unanimity prevailed amongst his followers, his cause everywhere triumphed: the concentrated zeal, the ardent co-operation of a comparative few, impelled by one spirit and directed to one object, were more than a match for hostile myriads. No sooner was the bond of unity broken by the prevalence of intestine quarrels and dissensions, than the interests of truth languished, until Mahometanism in the east, and Popery in the west, com-

pleted the work of deterioration, which the the loss of primitive simplicity and love, combined with the spirit of intolerance, first commenced.

"If the religion of Christ ever resumes her ancient lustre, and we are assured by the highest authority she will, it must be by retracing our steps, by reverting to the original principles on which, considered as a social institution, it was founded. We must go back to the simplicity of the first ages—we must learn to quit a subtle and disputatious theology for a religion of love, emanating from a few divinely energetic principles which pervade almost every page of inspiration, and demand nothing for their cordial reception and belief, besides an humble and contrite heart. Reserving to ourselves the utmost freedom of thought in the interpretation of the sacred oracles, and pushing our inquiries, as far as our opportunities admit, into every department of revealed truth, we shall not dream of obtruding precarious conclusions on others as articles of faith, but shall receive, with open arms, all who appear to love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, and find a sufficient bond of union, a sufficient scope for all our sympathies in the doctrine of the cross. If the Saviour appears to be loved, obeyed, and adored; if his blood is sprinkled on the conscience, and his Spirit resides in the heart, why should we be dissatisfied? We, who profess to be actuated by no other motive, to live to no other purpose, than the promotion of his interest."[i]

Concurring most cordially in the justice and importance of the sentiments thus admirably expressed, it is with great pleasure I bring before the reader the opinions of Baxter, on the subject of Catholic communion. Here he was greatly in advance of the age to which he belonged: for it will be found that his views did not altogether accord with those of any party during his own time; although there were a few persons who then held similar opinions. Rigid Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Independents, and Baptists, all objected to some of his principles of religious fellowship, and to the great objects of his efforts; yet a few of all these classes agreed with

(i) Hall's 'Reply to Kinghorn,' p. 250—252. The work of the Rev. Robert Hall, A. M. from which the above quotation is made, as do his other publications in this controversy, well deserves to be consulted; for though they all chiefly refer to the subject of Baptism, his general principles admit of a much more extended application. The volume of Dr. Mason, formerly of New York, on the same subject, is also worthy of perusal. It is singular, that while Presbyterians, Baptists, and Independents, have thus been gradually approximating to each other, and are likely to amalgamate finally into one body, Episcopacy does not appear to have advanced one step, or, in the slightest degree, to have lowered its tone or its pretensions. It is as lofty and unyielding at the present moment as it was in the days of Baxter. The ultimate effect of this on itself, and the other communities, it is not for me to predict; but should a general and cordial union of the other denominations eventually take place, and Episcopacy still refuse to acknowledge them as brethren, the question, who are the schismatics, will no longer be of difficult solution, and the issue of the contest will soon be decided.

him on the main subject. That subject will probably be found to confer on Baxter, one of his most distinguished honors; that he was among the first of our countrymen, who advocated the broad and important principle, that the only term of communion in the Christian church ought to be a profession of the faith of Christ, worthy of credit; that we are bound to receive all whom God has received; to exclude those only whom he appears not to have approved; and that though there be considerable diversity of opinion, and even of practice, among such as expect to meet in heaven at last, they ought to acknowledge one another as Christians on earth, and to hold fellowship in all things in which they are agreed, and can walk together.

To produce this visible union among all true Christians was the great object to which Baxter may be said to have devoted his life. Most of his controversies arose out of his solicitude to accomplish this most desirable consummation; and he never failed more to his own mortification, than when he lost his labor on this object, or stirred up further strife. He studied it profoundly, he entered into the prosecution of it with the utmost ardor; and from the first moment of his public life to the last he never lost sight of it.

The religious disorders and dissensions in the kingdom during the time of the civil wars, greatly affected him. In the army he spent several years of his ministry, endeavoring to subdue the spirit of division which he there witnessed. When he settled a second time at Kidderminster, he exerted himself to reconcile and harmonize all parties in the place; and succeeded. He corresponded privately with Gataker, Vines, Bishop Brownrig, Owen, Hammond, and other eminent men, on the terms and means of union. He then made some attempts with the ministers of his immediate neighborhood, and at last extended the attempt to the county of Worcester at large; and was successful beyond his expectations. He aimed at nothing less than uniting, without requiring a compromise of principle, Episcopalians and Presbyterians, Independents and Baptists, in one common fellowship, throughout the kingdom. To accomplish this object, he generalized the principles of communion, placing them on the simple ground of the sincere profession of our common Christianity: he inculcated strongly the doctrines of Christian liberty and forbearance; and endeavored to lessen the confidence of the several parties in the divine right of their respective systems. He diligently sought out the things in which all Christians agree, and dwelt on their importance; he painted in the brightest colors the comparatively trivial nature of the things in which they differ; and represented in the strongest terms, the guilt, the folly, and the danger of maintaining divisive courses, or of living in alienation from Christian brethren.

The first work which he published on this highly interesting and important subject is one, in the authorship of which he had only a part, though that was a principal one, 'Christian Concord; or, the Agreement of the Associated Pastors and Churches of Worcestershire: with Richard Baxter's Explication and Defence of it, and his Exhortation to Unity.' 1653. 4to. It contains the propositions and rules adopted by the associated ministers, the profession of faith in which they agreed, and Baxter's explanations of some passages in the propositions and confession chiefly intended for the satisfaction of the people of Kidderminster.

This agreement resulted from a voluntary association of the minister of the county of Worcester, formed chiefly by the exertions of Baxter, and among whom he acted as a sort of moderator, or president, during most of the time which he spent at Kidderminster. The object of it was to promote ministerial intercourse and improvement; to assist each other in promoting the interests of religion and morality, and in maintaining discipline and order in their respective congregations. It was not strictly Episcopal, Presbyterian, or Independent. It was not Episcopal; for it acknowledged no superiority among the ministers. It was not Presbyterian, for it disclaimed the exercise of authority on the part of the associated ministers, and acknowledged the right of the people "to try and discern" the proceedings of the ministers. It was not Independent, because it recognized the right of ministers to act separately from the people, acknowledged the common parochial boundaries, and the magistrates' aid in certain cases. Yet does the whole constitution of this associated body, and its rules for the regulation of particular churches, correspond more with the voluntary character of Congregational churches than with any other system. This remark will apply generally to Baxter's sentiments on the subject of church-government snd communion. He objected to being considered an Independent, as he objected to all party distinctions; but his writings and conduct were more in support of modified Independency than of any other system.

In confirmation and illustration of this point, I shall here give, from himself, an account of the system he pursued while at Kidderminster, though written long after he had left it. It presents before us the whole apparatus which he employed, and explains his general views of church-fellowship and ecclesiastical discipline. It shows that Baxter was the minister of a voluntary congregation, and pastor of a separate church, whose discipline was neither aided nor restrained by the civil powers, though Baxter was supported by the funds which belonged to the Establishment.

"When I undertook a parish charge myself, I kept with me two ministers, to assist me at one parish church and a small chapel. I had three godly justices of peace in the parish, who, to countenance our discipline, kept their monthly meeting at the same time and place. I had four ancient godly men that performed the office of deacons. I had above twenty of the seniors of the laity, who, without pretence of any office, met with us, to be witnesses that we did the church and sinners no wrong, and to awe the offenders by their presence. These met once a month together. We had almost all the worthy ministers of the county agreeing and associated to do the like in their several parishes, as far as they were able, that unity might the more convince the offenders. We had, in the same town, the next day after our monthly town meeting, an assembly of a dozen or twenty such ministers, to edify each other, and that those might be tried by them and before them, whether we could persuade them to repentance, who would not be prevailed with by ourselves. And, what was our ease incomparably beyond all this, neither the times nor our judgment allowing us to use discipline upon any but such as consented to our office and relation to them, we told them that we had all agreed only to exercise so much of discipline, as Episcopal, Presbyterian, and Independent, had no controversy about (some of the Episcopal joining us); and that we would exercise it in all our flocks, but we could be pastors to none against their wills. Whereupon, of about three thousand persons, one thousand eight hundred or more of which were at age to be communicants, all refused to do any more than hear me preach, for fear of discipline, except about six hundred, or a few more. These six hundred were the most understanding, religious part of the parish: all the grossly ignorant, and the common swearers, and all the drunkards and scandalous persons, were among the refusers, except about five or six young men that had got such a love to tippling that they could not leave it. These hid their sin awhile, but could not long: yet the trouble and work that these five or six men made us, sometimes by drunkenness, sometimes by fighting, sometimes by slandering their neighbors, or such like, were more than it is easy for an unexperienced person to believe. So hard was it to bring them to a confession of their sins, or to ask their forgiveness whom they grossly wronged, that when we endeavored, with all our skill, to convince them, and used gentle exhortation, and also opened to them the terrors of the Lord; when we prayed before them that God would give them repentance; when their own parents and relations joined with us; all would not make them confess their sin, but we were forced to cast them out of our communion, for the most part of them. Among all the rest, there were some that some-

times would need admonition and reconciliation with one another, which found us some work. But if we had been troubled with all the other thousand or twelve hundred of the parish, and so with all the other swearers, railers, common drunkards, some infidels, &c., what work should we have had! So much as I dare confidently say that, without being half so strict and troublesome as the ancient canons were, we could not possibly have done more in the work of discipline than govern one parish. Nor could we have done so much, but with such omissions as nothing but disability would have quieted our consciences under."[k]

This extract presents a very clear and succinct view of the system Baxter acted on while minister of Kidderminster, and it may be regarded as embodying the principles of communion which he advocated to the close of his life. His church, it is evident, was a voluntary association, distinct from the people of the parish, and from the general congregation. To this select body he dispensed the ordinances of the Gospel, and on its members alone he exercised the discipline of the kingdom of heaven. At the same time, he was regarded, in some sense, as the parochial clergyman, and was countenanced in various ways by the magistrates. His brethren in the ministry, and himself, formed also a voluntary association for mutual counsel and aid in their general work; and to enforce, by their combined influence, such measures as, individually, they might have found it difficult to carry. The state of the times, as has been remarked in another place, enabled Baxter and his brethren to pursue a line of conduct, which, either as ministers of a regular establishment, or as dissenters from it, they could not have done.

Of the publication of his 'Christian Concord,' he says, "When we sat on foot our association in Worcestershire,[l] I was desired to print our agreement, with an explication of the several articles, which I did in a small book, in which I have given the reasons why the Episcopal, Presbyterians, and Independents, might and should unite, on such terms, without any change of any of their principles; but I confess that the new Episcopal party, that follow Grotius too far, and deny the very being of all the ministers and churches that have not diocesan bishops, are not capable of union with the rest upon such terms. And hereby I gave notice to the gentry and others of the royalists in England, of the great danger they were in of changing their ecclesiastical cause, by following new leaders that were for

(k) 'Treatise of Episcopacy,' pp. 135, 136.

(l) In the Appendix to his Life there is inserted a long paper of reply to some exceptions against the 'Worcestershire Agreement,' and 'Christian Concord,' written by a nameless author, and sent by Dr. Warmstrye. The author I suppose to have been Warmstrye himself.

Grotianism. But this admonition did greatly offend the guilty, who now began to get the reins, though the old Episcopal Protestants confessed it all to be true. There is nothing bringeth greater hatred and sufferings on a man than to foreknow the mischief that men in power are doing and intend, and to warn the world of it: for while they are resolutely going on with it, they will proclaim him a slanderer that revealeth it, and use him accordingly; and never be ashamed when they have done it, and thereby declare all which he foretold to be true." [m]

He published, in 1656, 'The Agreement of divers Ministers in the county of Worcester, and some adjacent parts, for catechising or personal instructing all in their several parishes that will consent thereunto.' 12mo. This is a small production entirely practical in its nature, containing the articles of their agreement, an exhortation to the people to submit to the necessary work of catechising, and the profession of faith and catechism, which they were expected to make and learn. In consequence of Baxter's influence and example, the ministers who signed this agreement, and many others, adopted the practice of catechising their congregations, which it was the chief object of the Agreement to promote. Speaking on this subject, in reference to himself, he says,

"Of all the works that ever I attempted, this yielded me most comfort in the practice of it. All men thought that the people, especially the ancienter sort, would never have submitted to this course, and so that it would have come to nothing: but God gave me a tractable, willing people, and gave me also interest in them; and when I had begun, and my people had given a good example to other parishes, and especially the ministers so unanimously concurring, that none gainsayed us, it prevailed with the parishes about. I set two days a week apart for this employment; my faithful unwearied assistant and myself, took fourteen families every week; those in the town came to us to our houses; those in the parish my assistant went to, to their houses, besides what a curate did at a chapelry. First they recited the catechism to us, a family only being present at a time, and no stranger admitted: after that, I first helped them to understand it, and next inquired modestly into the state of their souls, and lastly endeavored to set all home to the convincing, awakening, and resolving, of their hearts according to their several conditions; bestowing about an hour and the labor of a sermon with every family. I found it so effectual, through the blessing of God, that few went away without some seeming humiliation, conviction, and purpose, and promise for a holy life. Except half a dozen or thereabouts of the most ignorant

(m) Life, part i. pp. 112, 113.

and senseless, all the families in the town came to me; and though the first time, they came with fear and backwardness; after that, they longed for their turn to come again. So that I hope God did good to many by it: and yet this was not all the comfort I had in it."[o]

The practice referred to was one of the most important means of Baxter's usefulness while in Kidderminster. It brought him into contact with every family and individual in his parish, which, with the fidelity of his addresses to them, was productive of the most salutary results. His connexion with the Worcestershire Union, and the little publication of which we have just spoken, led to his being appointed to deliver an address to his ministerial brethren, which afterwards appeared in the shape of 'The Reformed Pastor,' one of the most valuable of all his publications.

His next work, in this class, is a considerable quarto volume, entitled, 'Certain Disputations of Right to Sacraments, and the True Nature of Visible Christianity, &c.' 1656. The nature and object of this book I shall leave himself to explain. The following passage will show that Baxter held sentiments respecting the purity of Christian fellowship, which were not consistent with the practice of the church of England.

"Mr. Blake having replied to some things in my Apology, especially about right to the sacraments, or the just subjects of baptism and the Lord's-supper, I wrote five disputations on those points, proving that it is not the reality of a dogmatical or justifying faith, nor yet the profession of bare assent, called a dogmatical faith by many; but only the profession of a saving faith, which is the condition of men's title to church communion *coram ecclesia;* and that hypocrites are but analogically or equivocally called Christians, believers, and saints, &c. with much more to decide the most troublesome controversy of that time, which was about the necessary qualification and title of church members and communicants. Many men have been perplexed about that point and that book. Some think it cometh too near the Independents, and some, that it is too far from them; and many think it very hard that a credible profession of true faith and repentance should be made the stated qualification: because they think it incredible that all the Jewish members were such. But I have sifted this point more exactly and diligently, in my thoughts, than any other controversy whatosever; and fain I would have found some other qualification to take up with: either the profession of some lower faith than that which hath the promise of salvation; or, at least, such a profession of saving faith as needeth not to be credi-

(o) Life, part i. pp. 179, 180.

ble at all. But the evidence of truth hath forced me from all other ways, and suffered me to rest no where but here. That profession should be made necessary without any respect at all to credibility, and consequently to the verity of the faith professed, is incredible, and a contradiction, and the very word profession signifieth more. I was forced to observe that those who in charity would believe another profession to be the title to church communion do greatly cross their own design of charity. While they would not be bound to believe men to be what they profess, for fear of excluding many whom they cannot believe, they do leave themselves and all others as not obliged to love any church member as such with the love which is due to a true Christian, but only with such a love as they owe to the members of the devil; and so deny them the kernel of charity, by giving the shell to a few more than they should do. *Whereas, upon my deepest search, I am satisfied that a credible profession of true Christianity is it that denominateth the adult visible Christian.*" [p]

There may be some theoretical difference of opinion among Christians about what is included in, or essential to a credible profession, but, generally speaking, religious persons commonly agree in their opinion of those who are entitled to be regarded as Christians. Now if this kind of profession is held to be necessary to Christian communion, it is at once obvious that the principles of the church of England make no suitable provision for their operation. There is not in that establishment any line of demarcation between the openly profane or worldly, and the people of God. The evidence of the possession of true religion is not in it, the condition of enjoying even the most sacred ordinances. On this point, therefore, Baxter approached nearer to the Independents than he seemed willing to avow; and his practice while at Kidderminster appears to have corresponded with his theoretical views on this subject. In a parish consisting of several thousands, with a regular congregation of about eighteen hundred persons, there were only about six hundred whom he regarded as church members, to whom he administered the ordinances of the Gospel; and such was his regard to character, that he declared there were not a dozen of those persons in whose piety he had not great confidence.

The discussions of this volume, therefore, are of great importance; and, on the several points of which it treats, the reader who is desirous of knowing Baxter's sentiments, or of forming his own, may consult it to advantage. The following are the leading topics: "Whether ministers may admit persons into the church of Christ by baptism, upon the bare, verbal pro-

(p) Life, part i. pp. 113, 114.

fession of the true Christian, saving faith, without staying for, or requiring any further evidences of, sincerity?" This he determines in the affirmative. "Whether ministers must or may baptize the children of those that profess not saving faith, upon the profession of any other faith that comes short of it?" This he resolves in the negative. "Whether the infants of notoriously ungodly baptized parents have right to be baptized? Whether any besides regenerate believers and their seed have a right to the sacraments, given them by God, and may thereupon require them and receive them?" Both these questions he answers negatively. "Whether hypocrites, and other unregenerate persons, be called church members, Christians, believers, saints, adopted, justified, &c.; univocally, analogically, or equivocally?"

Into all these subjects he enters very fully, but in his characteristic manner; dividing, distinguishing, and explaining, till he leaves it sometimes doubtful how he is to be understood, unless we advert to his own practice. What is dubious in his theoretical discussions, may thus be easily explained. Baxter did not regard differences of opinion on various doctrinal questions, or respecting church government of much importance, while he could regard the parties as real Christians, and disposed to live in peace with others. To these two points he considered all other things subordinate. Christian fellowship, Catholicism, was not the fellowship of Calvinists or Arminians, of Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Independents, or Baptists; it was the fellowship of Christians, holding the one faith and hope of our Lord Jesus Christ, in unity of spirit and righteousness of life. This is the only Catholic communion which is worth contending for; and which, it cannot be doubted, will, in due time, absorb all other party distinctions and disputes.

The only book which discusses the principles of this work of Baxter's, known to me, is the 'Cœna quasi Koine; or, the New Closures broken down, and the Lord's Supper laid forth in common for all Church Members having a Dogmatical Faith.' By William Morice, Esq. of Werrington. 1657. 4to. It is not a professed answer to Baxter, but takes up the ground with a vast profusion of miscellaneous learning. The author was quite an Erastian, on the subject of church government, and contended for principles which are utterly destructive of all discipline, except as administered by the civil magistrate. He was knighted by Charles II. at his landing, and occupied the important post of Secretary of State for seven years after the Restoration. The work above-mentioned is a great curiosity for the display of classical reading which it affords. Every page is stuck full of learned quotation, evincing the knowledge of the author, but affording small evidence of his judgment. He bestows a la-

bored panegyric on Baxter, which, if it were not too long, I would introduce, both as an illustration of the character of the book, and of the admiration in which Baxter was held by him.

In the preface to the second edition of his 'Five Disputations,' Baxter refers to this work of Mr. Morice. "When I saw this book," he says, "made up of so much reading, and expressing so much industry and learning, I much rejoiced that England had such a gentleman; and I look on the book as a shaming reprehension of the idleness and ignorance of the multitude of the gentry who spend that time in hawking, and hunting, and complimenting, which, if better spent, might make them a blessing, and not a burden, to the land. But out of that learned volume, I am not able to find any clear discovery of what the author means by a dogmatical faith." Baxter thinks that Morice did not differ widely from himself; and Morice was exceedingly averse to being considered as an adversary to Baxter. The principles contended for by the two writers could not fail to be productive of very different results in practice. Baxter could only approve of select communion; Morice maintained open and promiscuous. [q]

The next work in this class which claims our attention, is 'Confirmation and Restauration the necessary means of Reformation and Reconciliation.' [r] The work, with this rather singular and alliteral title, appeared in 12mo, in 1658. Its connexion with Baxter's views of Catholic communion is at once obvious from the scope of the book, and from his own account of it. "Having in divers writings," he says, "moved for the restitution of a solemn transition of all that pass from an infant state of church-membership into the number of the adult, and are admitted to their privileges; and the associated ministers of this county having made it an article of their agreement, at last came forth an excellent exercitation on confirmation, written by Mr. Jonathan Hanmer, very learnedly and piously endeavoring the restoration of this practice. [s] Being very glad of so good a work, upon an invitation, I prefixed an epistle before it, which hath occasioned this following disputation. For when the book was read, the design was generally approved, as far as I can learn, and very acceptable to good men of all parties.

(q) Beside the main questions discussed in this work of Baxter's, there is a great deal of wrangling debate with Dr. Owen and others; particularly at the end, where he assigns reasons for making no answer to Mr. Robertson, or a more particular reply to Mr. Blake, or Dr. Owen. It would only distract the attention of the reader from the main subject of the chapter to refer to these personal debates, and therefore I have not adverted to them in the text.

(r) Works, vol. xiv.

(s) The book of Hanmer, adverted to by Baxter, is 'An Exercitation upon Confirmation, the ancient way of completing Church Members.' 1658. 8vo. The author was minister of Bishop's Tawton, in Devonshire, from which he was ejected in 1662. He was an Episcopalian, though a Nonconformist, and a man of very good learning.

But many of them called to me to try whether some more Scripture proofs might not be brought for it, that the preceptive, as well as the mediate necessity, might appear. At the desire of some reverend, godly brethren, I hastily drew up this, which is here offered you, partly to satisfy them in the point of Scripture evidence, but principally to satisfy my own earnest desires after the reformation and healing of the churches, to which I do very confidently apprehend this excellent work to have a singular tendency. Here is a medicine so effectual to heal our breaches, and set our disordered societies in joint, being owned in whole by the Episcopal, Presbyterian, Congregational, and Erastian, and in half by the Anabaptists. Thus, nothing but our own self-conceitedness, perverseness, laziness, or wilful enmity to the peace of the churches, is able to deprive us of a blessed success. But, alas, our minds are the subjects of disease, and are so alienated, exulcerated, and so selfishly partial and uncharitable, that when the plaster is offered us, and peace brought to our doors, I must needs expect that many should peevishly cast it away, and others betray it by a lazy commendation, and so disable the few that would be faithful, practical, and industrious, from that general success which is so necessary and desirable."[t]

The title of this work might lead the reader to suppose that it was a defence of the episcopal rite of confirmation, whereas it is, in fact, nothing more than a labored effort to prove that all who are baptized in infancy ought to make a personal and public profession of religion when they come to the years of maturity; and that unless this profession is satisfactory to the minister of the congregation to which the party propose to belong, they ought not to enjoy the Lord's-supper, or be considered members of the church. His fifth proposition may be said to embrace the whole subject: "As a personal faith is the condition before God, of title to the privileges of the adult; so the profession of this faith is the condition of his right before the church; and without this profession, he is not to be taken as an adult member, nor admitted to the privileges of such."[u]

As Episcopalians consider confirmation an ordinance of Christianity, Baxter endeavors to show that this is the only scriptural notion of confirmation. He does not object to the laying on of hands, provided the persons themselves agreed to it, or thought it necessary, but does not regard it as essential. And so far from thinking that only diocesan bishops have a right to confirm,[x] he shows, that it belongs to all ministers or pastors of

(t) Works, vol. xiv. pp. 403, 404. (u) Ibid. p. 414.

(x) So far from having great respect for episcopal confirmation, he tells the following story of his own confirmation:—"When I was a school-boy, about fifteen years of age, the bishop coming into the county, many went to him to be confirmed; we that were boys ran out to see the bishop among the rest, not knowing any thing of the meaning of the business. When we came thither we met about thirty or forty in all, of our own stature and temper, that had come to

the church, and that in fact they alone can properly exercise it, as they alone can know who deserve to be thus treated. As Presbyterians require a personal profession, and Independents a still more particular profession of personal religion in order to church membership; he endeavors to show that all the parties, not excluding Baptists, might easily harmonize on this subject, and that thus a line of demarcation between the world would be clearly and beneficially established. The object he had in view is certainly of great importance, but until the parties whom he wished to unite be agreed on some other important points than those which his discussion directly embraces, they are not likely to be united by agreement on such a rite or service as that in question. It may be the effect of reformation, but is not likely to be the cause or the means of it.[y]

Closely connected with the treatises on Right to Sacraments, and confirmation, is the next work of Baxter in this department, 'Five Dissertations of Church Government and Worship.' 4to. 1659. The design of this, as of all Baxter's works in this class, was to promote union and reconciliation among all parties. This object, however desirable in itself, has not yet been attained in the Christian church; nor were the means employed by Baxter always most wisely adapted to promote it, though most sincerely intended on his part. "In the first of these Disputations," he says, "I proved that the English diocesan prelacy is intolerable, which none hath answered. In the second, I have proved the validity of the ordination then exercised without diocesans in England, which no man hath answered, though many have urged men to be re-ordained. In the third, I have proved that there are divers sorts of episcopacy lawful and desirable. In the fourth and fifth, I show the lawfulness of some ceremonies, and of a liturgy, and what is unlawful here.

"This book being published when bishops, liturgy, and ceremonies, were most decried and opposed, was of good use to declare my judgment when the king came in; for if I had said as much then, I had been judged but a temporizer. But as it was effectual to settle many in a moderation, so it made abun-

be *bishopped*, as then it was called. The bishop examined us, not at all in one article of faith, but in a church-yard; in haste we were set in a rank, and he passed hastily over us, laying his hands on our heads, and saying a few words, which neither I, nor any that I spoke with, understood, so hastily were they uttered, and a very short prayer recited, and there was an end. But whether we were Christians, or infidels, or knew so much as that there was a God, the bishop little knew nor inquired. And yet he was esteemed one of the best bishops in England. And though the canons require that the curate or minister send a certificate that the children have learned the catechism, there was no such thing done, but we ran of our own accord to see the bishop only, and almost all the rest of the county had not this much; this was the old careless practice of this excellent duty of confirmation."—*Works*, vol. xiv. pp. 481, 482.

(y) This book Calamy says is highly commended by Dr. Patrick, the bishop of Ely, in his work, entitled 'Aqua Genitalis,'—*Calamy's Abridgment*, vol. i. p. 413.

dance of Conformists afterwards, or was pretended at least to give them satisfaction. Though it never meddled with the greatest parts of conformity, renouncing vows, assent and consent to all things in three books, &c. ; and though it unanswerably confuted our prelacy and re-ordination, and consequently the renunciation of the vow against prelacy; and opposed the cross in baptism. But, *sic vitant stulti vitia*, as my Aphorisms made some Arminians; if you discover an error to a injudicious man, he reeleth into the contrary error, and it is hard to stop him in the middle verity."[z]

This statement, by himself, of the subject and design of the work, is sufficient to explain its natute. Could Baxter have succeeded in getting Episcopalians to give up all that is peculiar in Episcopacy; and Presbyterians all that is peculiar to Presbyterianism; and Independents all that is distinctive in Independency, he would have succeeded in producing some agreement in a simple and practical system of church order and government. This consummation, however, is yet to come. If only pious persons were concerned in such matters; if there were no secular obstacles and interests in the way; if the doctrine of authority, and the influence of this world, were withdrawn, the church of Christ would probably soon assume a very different appearance from what it has yet done. Baxter's grand objection to many of those things, about which men then differed, was, their unqualified and unscriptural enforcement. He puts the case very admirably, and with some humor, in the following passage.

"I confess it is lawful for me to wear a helmet on my head in preaching; but it were not well if you would institute the wearing of a helmet, to signify our spiritual militia, and then resolve that all shall be silenced and imprisoned during life that will not wear it. It is lawful for me to use spectacles, or to go on crutches; but will you therefore ordain that all men shall read with spectacles, to signify our want of spiritual sight, and that no man shall go to church but on crutches, to signify our disability to come to God of ourselves. So, in circumstantials, it is lawful for me to wear a feather in my hat, and a hay-rope for a girdle, and a hair-cloth for a cloak; but if you should ordain that if any man serve God in any other habit, he shall be banished, or perpetually imprisoned, or hanged; in my opinion, you did not well: especially, if you add that he that disobeyeth you must also incur everlasting damnation. It is in itself lawful to kneel when we hear the Scriptures read, or when we sing psalms; but yet it is not lawful to drive all from hearing and singing, and lay them in prison that do it not

(z) Life, part i. pp. 117, 118.

kneeling. And why men should have no communion in the Lord's-supper that receive it not kneeling, or in any one commanded posture, and why men should be forbidden to preach the Gospel that wear not a linen surplice, I cannot imagine any such reason as will hold weight at the bar of God." [a]

This work is dedicated to his "Highness, Richard, Lord Protector." A few sentences from this document will show the feelings of Baxter towards Richard Cromwell, and what, according to him, were the feelings of the country.

"These papers are ambitious of accompanying those against Popery into your highness's presence, for the tender of their service, and that upon the same account. The controversies here decided are those that have had a hand in most of the great transactions that, of late years, have here passed, and that still have a hand in the differences that hinder our desired peace. I observe that the nation, generally, rejoiceth in your peaceable entrance upon the government; and are affected with indignation if they hear but any rumors that troublesome persons would disturb their hopes. And many are persuaded that you have been strangely kept from participating in any of our late bloody contentions, that God might make you the healer of our breaches, and employ you in that temple work, which David himself might not be honored with, though it was in his mind, because he had shed blood abundantly and made great wars." [b]

While this passage shows the good feeling towards Richard Cromwell by which Baxter was influenced, and that he could readily submit to his government, it also shows, in connexion with what follows of the dedication, and with many parts of the book, his anxiety to get the magistrate to interfere, to put an end to religious differences, and to establish something like a uniform system. His leaning to this kind of interference often led him to write inconsistently with his better and more scriptural views. He would have been content with a very moderate system of state administration; but even the most moderate, according to his views, would have produced effects, of which he would have been the first to complain. Till magistrates are left to manage the affairs of this world, and the church left to manage its own affairs, and to provide for its own interests, under the direction of Scripture and the influence of Christ's authority and Spirit, it is vain to expect any thing like general agreement or harmony among the subjects of the same kingdom. The interference of worldly men with the church of Christ must, of necessity, be injurious to it; while the parties who admit this interference on the one hand, and

(a) Works, vol. xiv. pp. 430, 431. (b) Ibid. pp. 1, 2.

those who decline it on the other, are placed on an unequal footing, and contend on unequal terms.

Baxter was not the only laborer in the cause of peace and of catholic communion. One other individual at least entered fully and cordially into his views, and devoted much time and labor to promote them, not in England only, but throughout Protestant Europe. The following Tract of Baxter's is connected with his exertions in this cause: 'The Judgment and Advice of the Associated Ministers of Worcestershire, concerning Mr. John Dury's Endeavors after Ecclesiastical Peace.' 1658. 4to. The account given by the author of this small publication, is as follows:—"Mr. John Dury having spent thirty years in endeavors to reconcile the Lutherans and Calvinists, was now going over sea again in that work, and desired the judgment of our association, how it should be successfully expedited; which at their desire I drew up more largely in Latin, and more briefly in English. The English letter he printed, as my letter to Mr. Dury for pacification." [c]

Of the respectable individual who spent so many years in the interesting work of reconciliation, it is impracticable to give any satisfactory account. He appears to have been a native of Scotland, but resided many years in Germany. In the year 1628, he was minister to the English Company of Merchants at Elbing, in Prussia, and was then led, through the influence of the learned and excellent Dr. Godeman, a privy counseller to Gustavus Adolphus of Sweden, to engage along with him in an attempt to unite the Lutheran aud Calvinistic churches. They held conferences on this subject with the Chancellor Oxenstiern, who encouraged them in their attempt. Dury petitioned Gustavus to lend his aid. Sir Thomas Roe, ambassador from Great Britain to Sweden and Poland, was consulted, and interested himself in the affair; and having promised to engage the English bishops to consider the subject, Mr. Dury left Elbing in 1630 for England. Sir Thomas Roe recommended the business to the king, who referred it to the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of London, requiring them to hear Dury's proposals. They heard him accordingly, professed to be friends to his project, and seemed to adopt some of his recommendations. To prepare the way for future treaties, it was proposed that the magistrates on both sides should prohibit railing disputes in the pulpit; should put down all party names, as far as they could, and not suffer any debates about ceremonies or forms of public worship.

The good man, flattered by these attentions, prosecuted his enterprise with great vigor. He returned to the Continent,

(c) Life, part i. p. 117.

and addressed the confederated ambassadors of the Protestant states, assembled at Frankfort, entreating their aid and countenance. They promised fair, but did nothing. He visited Holland on his errand of peace; and in 1633 returned to England, where he found Laud in the place of Abbot, to whom he presented his letters from foreign churches and divines. Laud did not appear to oppose, but gave no hearty encouragement. He met with more active assistance from Bishops Hall and Davenant, and Archbishop Usher. Again, he went to Germany, and met the Protestant ambassadors at Frankfort in 1634, by whom his object seemed to be patronized. He returned to England the following year, and was graciously received by the king; after which, he went back to Holland, and visited the different synods; and proceeded thence to Sweden, in which he labored and travelled a great deal. Having again visited Germany, he went to Denmark; and after many other sojournings, returned to England once more in 1641. He was one of the extra number added to the Westminster Assembly, whose labors he assisted, being rather inclined to the side of the Independents. He lived till after the Restoration, but failed in the accomplishment of the grand object so dear to his heart; though he seems to have been useful in softening prejudices which he could not altogether subdue. In some respects, he appears to have resembled Baxter himself. He was a powerful advocate for ecclesiastical peace—a man of schemes and projects—of pure intentions, but of more zeal than judgment—who thought he could accomplish a great deal by meetings of ecclesiastics, and determinations of governments in matters of religion. As the friend of Baxter and Boyle, Usher and Hall, and many other good men, he deserved some notice in this place. He published a variety of small treatises, most of which related to his main undertaking. [d]

The order of time requires that I should notice the next small treatise of Baxter, in this place. His 'Universal Concord,' which was published in 12mo, in 1658. "Having been desired," he says, "in the time of our associations, to draw up those terms which all Christian churches may hold communion upon, I published them, though too late for any such use (till God gave men better minds), that the world might see what our religion and our terms of communion were; and that, if after-ages prove more peaceable, they may have some light from those that went before them. It consisteth of three parts.

(d) The principal part of the above account of Dury is taken from a scarce tract published by Hartlib, the friend of Milton, entitled 'A Briefe Relation of that which hath been lately attempted to procure Ecclesiastical Peace among Protestants.' London, 1641. 4to. At the end of it is a copy of the petition presented to Gustavus Adolphus by Dury.—See also *Brookes's Lives of the Puritans*, vol. iii. p. 369.

"The first containeth the Christian religion, which all are positively to profess; that is, either to subscribe the Scriptures in general, and the ancient creeds in particular, or, at most, the confession or articles annexed: *e. g.*, I do believe all the sacred, canonical Scripture, which all Christian churches do receive; and, particularly, I believe in God the Father Almighty, &c. The second part, instead of books of unnecessary canons, containeth seven or eight points of practice for church order, which, so it be practised, it is no great matter whether it be subscribed or not. And here it must be understood, that these are written for times of liberty, in which agreement, rather than force, doth procure unity and communion. The third part containeth the larger description of the office of the ministry, and, consequently, of all the ordinances of worship, which need not be subscribed, but none should preach against it, nor omit the practice, except peace require that the point of infant baptism be left free.

"This small book is called by the name of Universal Concord, which, when I wrote, I thought to have published a second part, viz., a large volume, containing the particular terms of concord between all parties capable of concord; but the change of the times hath necessarily changed that purpose."[e]

Though Baxter did not publish formally a second part of this work, every thing he had to communicate on the subject, must have been presented in one or other of the numerous books which he subsequently published on the subject of communion, or of nonconformity. It is really not matter of regret that he did not publish more, but that he published so much on these topics, as the very quantity which he wrote may be said to have buried his sentiments, and materially contributed to defeat his own purpose and anxious desire. Any one of his principal treatises might have exhausted the subject, had it been judiciously managed; but it is now vain to express our regrets.

The works we have noticed, include all that Baxter published on the subject of catholic communion, previously to the Restoration. In his own Life, a variety of papers and letters are inserted, relating to the topic. They contain his proposals to several parties, or to eminent individuals among them, adapted to the peculiar sentiments and circumstances of each. He did not always succeed, but was always heard respectfully, and seldom failed to make some impression in favor of peace. From the progress made by his system in various quarters, it is hard to say what might have been the final result, had the political state of the country not undergone a complete change by the overthrow of the dynasty of the Cromwells, and the return of Charles. On the diocesan Episcopalians, Baxter

(e) Life, part i. pp. 119, 120.

had found the greatest difficulty in making a favorable impression, even while the fortunes of their church were in the lowest state. Their principles seemed not to admit of union and cooperation with others. Many of the Baptists and Independents he found it difficult to convince that his way was preferable to theirs; but still his success among them was enough to encourage him to go on. The church party, however, offered him little hope before, and, after the Restoration, none at all.

That event did not terminate the labors of Baxter to promote unity, but for a while they were necessarily diverted into a new channel. The comprehension of the Nonconformists in the church, by the modification of its terms, became the great object of his zealous endeavors for many years. What he did to accomplish it, and to prevent an entire and permanent secession from the church, with the causes of his failure, we have elsewhere recorded. If Baxter had not had to struggle with secular power and interests, but only to maintain the conflict with those who had as little civil connexion with the state as himself, the probabilty is that some such system as he himself acted upon in Kidderminster, would have been very generally adopted over England. Without professing to approve of all its parts, its substance is so radically Christian, and its effects were so excellent, that the individual who could not have lived in such a communion, must have had a very obtuse understanding, or an unenviable state of moral feeling. The prevalence of such a system, would have converted England into a spiritual paradise, and caused its most barren deserts to flourish as the garden of the Lord.

The mortification which such a man as Baxter must have experienced from the failure and ruin of all his labors and hopes, may be better conceived than expressed. Though not easily or soon discouraged, he found, after the Restoration, and especially after the Bartholomew ejection, that he was left to contend with men of a totally different spirit from himself, men of secular views and feelings, who regarded the church but as a theatre of ambition, or in subservience to their earthly interests. He became one of a small but noble band of sufferers, who always appear to advantage, except when they attempt to identify themselves with a body so entirely worldly as was the church of England while Charles II. was its head, and Sheldon the chief minister of its spiritual affairs.

About the time of the Restoration, Baxter brought out two small practical works on his favorite subject. The titles might lead us to suppose that he had a special reference to Popery in them; but this is not the case any further than he regarded it as one of the sects, and that the most dangerous and dogmatical, which divided the church. The first of these is, 'The true Catho-

lic, and Catholic Church described ; and the vanity of the Papists, and all Schismatics that confine the Catholic Church to their sect, discovered and shamed.' 1660. 12mo.—The second is, 'Catholic Unity, or the only way to bring us all to be of one religion.' 1660. 12mo.[f] These are plain practical discourses, the substance of which had been preached in London and Worcester, containing much that is calculated to be useful to Christians of all professions. He tells us that their subject is,

"For catholicism against all *sects*, to show the sin, and folly, and mischief, of all sects that would appropriate the church to themselves, and trouble the world with the question, Which of all these parties is the church? as if they knew not that the catholic church is that whole which containeth all the parts, though some are more pure, and some less. Especially, it is suited against the Romish claim, which damneth all Christians besides themselves, and it detecteth and confuteth dividing principles. For I apprehend it is a matter of great necessity to imprint true catholicism on the minds of Christians ; it being a most lamentable thing to observe how few Christians in the world there be, that fall not into one sect or other, and wrong not the common interest of Christianity for the promoting of the interest of their sect. How lamentably love is thereby destroyed, so that most men think not that they are bound to love those as the members of Christ, who are against their party. The leaders of most sects do not stick to persecute those that differ from them, and think the blood of those who hinder their opinions, and parties, to be an acceptable sacrifice unto God. And if they can but get to be of a sect which they think the *holiest*, (as the Anabaptists and Separatists,) or which is the *largest*, (as the Greeks and Papists,) they think, then, that they are sufficiently warranted to deny others to be God's church, or at least to deny them Christian love and communion.

"To this small book I annexed a postscript against a ridiculous pamphlet of one *Malpas*, an old scandalous neighbor minister, who was permitted to stay in by the Parliament, (so far were they from being over-strict in their reformation of the clergy,) and now is a considerable man among them." [g]

A long interval elapsed before any thing further on this subject proceeded from Baxter's prolific pen. At length, in 1669, he published in octavo, his 'Cure for Church divisions.' "I first published," he says, "some old notes, written eleven or twelve years ago, called 'Directions for Weak Christians,' and annexed to them 'The Character of a Sound Christian.' For both which I wrote what was as like to have exasperated the impatient as this book is, and yet I heard of no complaints. Afterwards I

(f) Works, vol. xvi. (g) Life, part i. p. 112.

wrote this, and sent it to the licenser, who, upon perusal, refused to license it, and so it lay by, and I purposed to meddle with it no more. But leaving it in the bookseller's hands, who had offered it to be licensed, after a long time he got it done, and thus unexpectedly it revived.

"The reasons of my writing it were no fewer than all these following, which I now submit to the judgment of all men truly peaceable and impartial, who value the interests of Christianity, and of the universal church, above their own. To make my foregoing 'Directions to Weak Christians' more complete, having directed them about the private matters of their souls, I intended this as another part to direct them, in order to the church's peace. Many good people of tender consciences and weak judgments, desiring my advice about communion in the public assemblies, I found it meetest to publish this general advice for all, to save me the labor of speaking to particular persons, and to serve those that lived farther off. I saw those principles growing up apace in this time of provocation, which will certainly increase or continue our divisions, if they continue and increase. I am sure that our wounds are made by wounding principles of doctrine, and it must be healing doctrines that must heal us; and I know that we cannot be healed till doctrinal principles be healed. To give way to the prevalency of dividing opinions, is to give up our hopes of future unity and peace; and to give up our hopes of unity and peace, is to despair of all true reformation and happiness of the church on earth. If ever the church be reduced to that concord, strength, and beauty, which all true Christians do desire, I am past doubt that it must be by such principles as I have laid down.

"But my grand reason was, that I might serve the church of Christ in the reviving and preservation of Christian love. As it was an extraordinary measure of the Spirit which Christ made his witness in the gospel church, so it is as extraordinary a measure of love which he maketh the new commandment and the mark of all true disciples. Whether afflicting on one side and unmerciful and unjust censures on the other side, one driving away, and the other flying away, be either a sign or means of love; and whether taking others to be intolerable in the church, and unworthy of our communion, and separating from or avoiding the worship where they are present, be likely to kindle love or kill it, let any man judge that hath himself the exercise of reason and unfeigned love.

"Another reason why I set upon this work was, because I saw few others would do it. If it must be done, and others will not, then I must take it for my duty. And, indeed, I knew but few whom I was willing to thrust upon it so forwardly as myself, for fear of being the author of their sufferings. Many may be abler,

who are not in other respects so fit. Some ministers are young men, and likely to live longer to serve God in his church, and their reputation is needful to their success; if they be vilified, it may hinder their labor. And experience telleth us, that the dividing spirit is very powerful and victorious in censorious vilifying of dissenters. But I am almost *miles emeritus*, at the end of my work, and can reasonably expect to do but little more in the world, and therefore have not their impediment; and for popular applause, I have tried its vanity; I have had so much of it, till I am brought to a contempt if not a loathing of it.

"Some of my brethren have great congregations to teach, which are so inclined to this dividing way, that they cannot bear their information. And I will add one reason more of the publishing, though not of the writing, of my book. When it had been long cast by, I found in the 'Debater,' and 'Ecclesiastical Politician,' that the Nonconformists are made ridiculous and odious, as men of erroneous, uncharitable, and ungovernable principles and spirits, though they subscribe to all the doctrine of the church of England. And I thought that the publication of this book, would leave a testimony to the generations to come, by which they might know whether we were truly accused, and whether our principles were not as much for love and peace as theirs, and as consistent with order and government." [h]

Such are the chief of *twenty-seven* reasons, which Baxter assigns for writing his Cure. That Cure prescribes *sixty* directions to the people, and *twenty-two* additional ones to their pastors. It is full of excellent advice and admonition; but is both too general and too minute. It offended both parties, as the author anticipated; for he speaks too much as a dissenter for churchmen, and too much as a churchman for dissenters. He had an extensive knowledge of the evils and errors of all parties, on which he dwelt too largely; and while he failed in adapting his remedies to the disease of which he so bitterly complains. [i]

Baxter met with an opponent of this work in a person whom he little expected to encounter. His former friend, Edward Bagshaw, published a reply to it, with the following title: 'An Antidote against Mr. Baxter's palliated cure of church divisions; or an account of several weighty and just exceptions against that book.' 1670. 4to. Bagshaw was the son of an attorney at Broughton, and educated for the ministry, at Christ-church,

(h) 'Defence of the Principles of Love,' pp. 42—64.

(i) Among other attacks made on this work, was the following:—"A Pair of Spectacles, very usefull and needfull for all those that read Mr. Baxter's Catholick Charity, in his book called 'The Cure of Church Divisions,' that so they may see and understand the better what they read, and not be led away with error instead of truth. Written by a Lover of Truth and Peace, and of all the People of Peace." 1670. 4to.

Oxford. His fine talents, and extensive learning, qualified him to become second master of Westminster school, when Dr. Busby was head master. He occupied the parish of Ambrosden, in Oxfordshire, till the Bartholomew Act turned him out of the church, and left him to find a sphere of usefulness with the means of living among the Nonconformists. Bagshaw appears to have been an Independent in his principles; and was a man of great mental ardor and decision of character, which occasioned his being represented as hot-headed, turbulent, and fanatical. He suffered greatly for his principles, but nobly refused to sacrifice them to his interests or ambition.

He considered Baxter's 'Cure' as reflecting deeply on the dissenters; as calculated to aggravate their sufferings, and to justify their enemies in the severity they were inflicting on them. Though nothing was farther from Baxter's thoughts than this, Bagshaw had too much ground for alleging the injurious tendency of the book, on which he animadverted. He uses great freedom and plainness of speech with Baxter, and endeavors to show that his hard words and biting censures had exasperated the evil, instead of curing it.

Baxter lost no time in replying, which he did in his 'Defence of the Principles of Love, which are necessary to the unity and concord of Christians, and are delivered in a book called The Cure of Church Divisions. By Richard Baxter, one of the Mourners for a Self-dividing and Self-afflicting Land.' 1671. 8vo.

This volume is divided into two parts. After a long preface, comes "The general part, or Introduction to the Defence of the Cure of Church Divisions: being a narrative of those late actions which have occasioned the offence of men on both extremes; with the true reasons of them, and of these writings, which some count unseasonable; with the true stating of the case of that separation, which the opposed treatise meddleth with; and an answer to several great objections." Then comes the second part, or his 'Answer to the untrue and unjust exceptions of the Antidote.'

Bagshaw had taken forty-one exceptions to Baxter's 'Cure;' who accordingly replies to them *seriatim*. He addresses Bagshaw as his dear brother; but makes it his business to convict him "not of *mistakes*," lest the reader should not understand "whether it be mistakes of *reason* or *fact;*" nor will "he call them *lies*, because it is a provoking word; therefore *untruths* must be the middle term." He endeavors to show that, in what he himself had written, he had been solely influenced by his desire of peace, and his utter aversion to all needless separations; and that Bagshaw had done injustice both to his princi-

ples and his dispositions, as well as to his writings. Speaking of his 'Cure,' and of Bagshaw's answer to it, he says,

"When my 'Cure of Church Divisions' came out, the sober party of ministers were reconciled to it, especially the ancienter sort, and those that had seen the evils of separation; but some of the London ministers, who had kept up public assemblies, thought it should have been less sharp; and some thought, because they were under the bishops' severities, that it was unseasonable: for the truth is, most men judge by sense, and take that to be good or bad which they feel to do them good or hurt at the present. And because the people's alienation from the prelates, liturgy, and parish churches, did seem to make against the prelates, and to make for the Nonconformists' interest, they thought it not prudent to gratify the prelates so far as to gainsay it. So they considered not from whence dividing principles come, to what they tend, what a disgrace they are to our cause; how one of our own errors will hurt and disparage us more than all the cruelty of our adversaries, or that sinful means is seldom blessed to do good.

"When the book came out, the separating party, who had received before an odious character of it, did, part of them, read and interpret it by the spectacles and commentary of their passions and fore-conceits: and the most of them would not read it at all; but took all that they heard for granted. The hottest that was against it, was, Mr. Edward Bagshaw, a young man who had written formerly against monarchy, and afterwards written for me against Bishop Morley; and being of a resolute Roman spirit, was sent first to the Tower, and then laid in a horrid dungeon. He wrote against me a pamphlet so full of untruths and spleen, and so little pertinent to the cause, that I never met with a man who called for an answer to it; but yet the ill principles of it made me think it needed an answer, which I wrote. But I found that party grown so tender, expecting little but to be applauded for their godliness, and to be flattered, while they expected that others should be most sharply dealt with; and, indeed, to be so utterly impatient of that language in a confutation which had any suitableness to the desert of their writings, that I purposed to give over all controversial writings with them, or any other, without great necessity; and the rather, because my own style is apt to be guilty of too much freedom and sharpness in disputings." [k]

In answer to Baxter's 'Defence of the Principles of Love,' Bagshaw published 'A Defence of the Antidote.' 1671. 4to. This pamphlet I have not been able to procure; but the object of it seems to have been to retaliate on Baxter, to expose some

(k) Life, part iii. pp. 72, 73.

of his inconsistencies, and to show that he who would prevent sin in others, must beware of casting stumbling-blocks before them.

This produced from Baxter 'A second Admonition to Mr. Bagshaw, written to call him to repentance for many false doctrines, crimes, and especially fourscore palpable untruths in matters of fact, published by him in two small libels.' 1671. 4to. The controversy was now become warm and personal. Baxter says, "Mr. Bagshaw wrote a second book against my Defence, full of untruths, which the furious temerarious man did utter, out of the rashness of his mind, which made him so little heed what he had read, and answered, as that one would scarce think he had ever read my book. I replied to him in an Admonition, telling him of his mistakes."[l]

Bagshaw met the second admonition by 'A Review; or all Mr. Baxter's Calumnies confuted;' to which Baxter finally rejoined in 'The Church told of Mr. Edward Bagshaw's Scandal, and warned of the dangerous snares of Satan now laid for them in his love-killing principles.' 1672. Unfortunately, both the church and the world had been told too much of this controversy already. Hard names and harsh censures are freely used by both parties, in a way which reflects no credit on either of them. In referring to his last publication on this controversy, Baxter mentions the death of his opponent, and expresses the pain which he then felt. "Mr. Bagshaw, in his rash and ignorant zeal, thinking it a sin to hear a Conformist, and that the way to deal with the persecutors, was, to draw all the people as far from them as he could, and not to hold any communion with any that did conform, having printed his third reviling libel against me, called for my third reply. But being printed without license, L'Estrange, the searcher, surprised part of it in the press, there being lately greater penalities laid on them that print without license than ever before. And about the day that it came out, Mr. Bagshaw died, a prisoner, though not in prison, which made it grievous to me to think that I must seem to write against the dead. While we wrangle here in the dark, we are dying and passing to the world that will decide all our controversies. And the safest passage thither is by peaceable holiness."[m]

I cannot take leave of Bagshaw, notwithstanding this unlovely debate with Baxter, without giving from Baxter himself a little more of his history. "After his ejection by the Act of Uniformity, he went over into Ireland with the Earl of Anglesey, whose household chaplain he was, and having preached there some time, and returning back, was apprehended and sent pri-

(l) Life, part iii. p. 85.

(m) Ibid. p. 89.

soner to the Tower; where he continued long, till his means were all spent; and how he afterwards procured bread, I know not. When he had been prisoner about a year, it seems he became acquainted with Mr. Davis, who was also a prisoner in the Tower. This Mr. Davis having been very serviceable in the restoration of the king, and having laid out much of his estate for his service, thought he might be the bolder with his tongue and pen; and being of a spirit which some call undaunted, but others furious or indiscreet at best, did give an unmannerly liberty to his tongue, to accuse the court of such crimes, with such aggravations, as being a subject I think it not meet to name. At last, he talked so freely in the Tower also, that he was shipped away prisoner to Tangier in Africa. Mr. Bagshaw, being surprised by L'Estrange, and his chamber searched, there was found with him a paper, called Mr. Davis's case. Whereupon he was brought out to speak to the king, who examined him of whom he had that paper; but he refused to confess, and spake so boldly to the king, as much offended him: whereupon he was sent back to the Tower, and laid in a deep, dark, dreadful dungeon. When he had lain there three or four days and nights, without candle, fire, bed, or straw, he fell into a terrible fit, which the physicians thought did save his life; for the pain was so vehement, that it kept him in a sweat, which cast out the infection of the damp. At last, by the solicitation of his brother, who was a Conformist, and dearly loved him, he was taken up, and after that was sent away to Southsea Castle, an unwholesome place in the sea by Portsmouth; where, if he be alive, he remaineth close prisoner to this day, with Vavasour Powel, a preacher in North Wales, and others; speeding worse than Mr. Crofton, who was at last released."[n]

The sufferings of Bagshaw did not terminate here. He was released from this imprisonment, which appears to have been very long; but after returning to London, according to Wood, "he fell to his old trade of conventicling and raising sedition, for which, being ever and anon troubled, he had at length the oaths of allegiance and supremacy tendered to him; but he, boggling at them at first, and afterwards denying to take them, was committed prisoner to Newgate, where he continued twenty-two weeks before his death."[o] This event took place on the 28th of December, 1671. He was buried in Bunhill-fields; and, as a proof of the estimation in which he was held, his funeral was attended by nearly a thousand Protestant dissenters. The inscription on his monument, written by Dr. Owen, expresses the high opinion which he entertained of his faith, courage, and patience; and the unmerited sufferings which he

(n) Life, part ii. pp. 378, 379. (o) Athen. Oxon. vol. ii. p. 944.

had endured from '*the reproaches of pretended friends*,' as well as the persecutions of professed adversaries.[p] I have thought it right to be thus particular respecting a man who possessed no ordinary merit as a scholar, who was a great sufferer for conscience' sake, and who ought to be known in a more advantageous character than as the controversial opponent of Richard Baxter.[q]

From this unpleasant personal controversy with Bagshaw, we

(p) Noncon. Mem. vol. iii. p. 113.

(q) In that singular book, Walter Pope's 'Life of Bishop Ward,' there are some curious anecdotes of Bagshaw. When Pope was proctor of the University of Oxford, "The godly party," as he calls them, "resolved to abolish the statute, enjoining the wearing of caps and hoods, crying out against them as relics of Popery, and rags of the scarlet whore. To effect this their design, they sent an envoy to me, to engage me to comply with them, well knowing, that without my concurrence, their design would prove abortive. The person whom they employed, was a school-fellow and intimate friend of mine, who, although the son of a royalist, upon some disappointment, especially a great one that happened to him at Westminster, by the means of Mr. Busby, of which perhaps more hereafter. I say, upon this and other misfortunes, he became a Presbyterian and Commonwealth's man; if this addition be not superfluous, he was a man of learning, and knew it, and very hot and zealous in his way. He, I say, came to my chamber, and told me his message. 'Well,' said I to him, 'what have you to say against caps and hoods?' He made a long discourse, which I heard with patience; and when I perceived he was silent, 'Ned,' said I to him, 'prithee go back to thy chamber, and put in writing all that thou hast said, and bring it to me.' 'And what will you do with it then?' said he; 'I will,' I replied, 'blot out the words, caps and hoods, and in their places insert gowns; will not your arguments be every whit as strong against them as against formalities?' 'I confess they will,' he answered, 'but we are not come thither yet.' I replied, 'I'd make it my endeavor to keep you where you are, and so we parted.'

Pope gives a humorous account of the quarrel between Busby and Bagshaw, which seems to have been as hot as that with Baxter. After the rupture, he says, "He turns with a vengeance, goes over to the Gentiles, and that he might be revenged upon Mr. Busby, sacrifices to Moloch, worships and adores the worst of men, even the judges of King Charles the First. But Mr. Busby, who ploughed with the same heifers, had too much compliance, cunning, and money, to be hurt by him. Upon this, he returns to his student's place at Christ-church, makes me a visit, and rails so bitterly against Mr. Busby, that even I was forced to take his part. He remained at Oxford, propagating his commonwealth principles; and when he was censor, which office in other colleges is called the dean, whose business it is to moderate at disputations, and give the scholars questions, he gave some in politics, and ordered the respondents to maintain them against monarchy and episcopacy. There he continued till the king was restored; then some considerable friends of his, whom I knew, advised him to go into the country, and there to live peaceably and conformably for the space of one year, at the end of which, they assured him they would procure him some considerable preferment in the church. Accordingly, he went and tried, but not being able to hold out so long, in a short time he repaired to London, seven times more embittered against ecclesiastical and kingly government than when he went into the country. And now he sides tooth and nail with the fanatics, and makes a great figure amongst them, exceeding most, if not all of them, in natural and acquired parts. King Charles sent for him, designing to work some good upon him, and do him a kindness; but he found him so obstinate and refractory, that he was forced to leave him to his own imaginations. He afterwards married a blind woman, who fell in love with him for his preaching; after which, I met him in Covent Garden, and accosted him freely. After the usual compliments passed, 'Ned,' said I to him jocularly, 'I hear thou hast married a blind woman, dost thou intend to beg with her?' Upon this I perceived his countenance change, and he returned me this answer: 'What's that to you; may I not marry whom I please?' 'Nay,' said I, 'if you are pleased, I have no reason to be offended,' and so we parted, and I never saw him after; but I understood since, that he died a prisoner in a house near Newgate, whither he was committed for his violent opposition to the government."—*Life of Seth Ward*, pp. 38—40.

proceed to notice Baxter's next publication, 'The True and Only Way of Concord of all Christian churches; the Desirableness of it, and the Detection of false, dividing Terms.' 1680. 8vo. To this volume is prefixed a prefatory letter to Dr. Morley, bishop of Winchester, and Dr. Gunning, bishop of Ely, the only Episcopal survivors with whom he had maintained the chief debates at the Savoy conference. The object of this preface, and, indeed, of the work, which was called forth by his controversy with Dodwell, is to state and defend the moderate proposals for peace and union which were then made. The volume is divided into three parts. In the first, he assigns reasons for the desirableness and necessity of unity; in the second, he discusses the terms of concord; and, in the third, he treats of schism.

There are many very excellent things, in the form both of principle and advice, scattered over this treatise; but there is a vast deal of extraneous matter, which so clouds and oppresses the argument, that much of its strength is destroyed. He defines schism to be "an unlawful separation from one or many churches; or making parties and divisions in them." He represents it as "usually caused by unskilful, proud, church tyrants and dogmatists; or by erroneous, proud, self-conceited persons." The necessary means of unity and church concord he represents as these; "That every catechised, understanding person, professing repentance, belief, and consent to the baptismal covenant, and the children of such dedicated by them to Christ, be baptized. And the baptized, accounted Christians, have right to Christian communion till their profession be validly disproved by an inconsistent profession or conversation; that is, by some doctrine against the essence of Christianity, or some scandalous, wilful sin, with impenitence, after sufficient admonition. That no man be excommunicated that is not proved thus far to excommunicate himself: and that the catechised or examined person be put upon no other profession of belief, consent, and practice, as interpreting the sacramental covenant, but of the articles of the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and decalogue understood; and the general belief of, consent to, and practice of, all that he discerneth to be the Word of God."[r] He recommends that "the magistrate have the only public judgment whom he shall countenance and maintain, or tolerate, and whom he shall punish, or not tolerate or maintain; and that he never be the executioner of the clergy's sentence, without or against his own conscience and judgment."[s] In connexion with this, he recommends "the Christian magistrate to make three sorts of laws; one for the approved and main-

(r) Baxter's 'Concord,' pp. 139, 140. (s) Part iii. p. 140.

tained churches and pastors; another for the tolerated; and a third for the intolerable."[t] On the subject of subscription, his recommendation is as follows: "That the approved and maintained ministers be put to subscribe their belief of, consent to, and resolved practice or obedience of, all the sacred canonical Scriptures, so far as by diligent study they are able to understand them; and, more particularly, of the Christian religion summarily contained in the sacramental covenant, and in the ancient creeds received by the universal church, the Lord's Prayer and the Decalogue, as it is the law of Christ, and expounded by him in the Holy Scriptures; and that they will be faithful to the king and kingdom, and, as ministers, will faithfully guide the flocks in holy doctrine, worship, discipline, and example of life, laboring to promote truth, holiness, love, peace, and justice, for the salvation of men's souls, the edification of the church, and the glorifying and pleasing of God our Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier. And that the said maintained ministers be tried by the regulating laws which determine only such circumstance as *in genere* are necessary to be agreed on for uniformity and common harmony: as of time, place, parish bounds, what translation of Scripture to use, what version of Psalms, what decent habit, &c., not put to profess approbation of all these; but required to use them, and censured if they do not."[u]

Such is the substance of Baxter's views on the principal points. Considering what his sentiments were respecting church and state, they must be regarded as, on the whole, enlightened and liberal. His ideas of subscription and conformity were by no means rigid: and had only such a degree of liberty been allowed by the church of England, a substantial uniformity would have been secured, and the best part of her clergy prevented from separating from her communion. Such a degree of laxity some would consider very dangerous to the church; but they should remember that the uniformity required and enforced has only produced outward or nominal agreement, leaving the parties still widely different from each other, and in regard to the principles subscribed, as wide as the utmost latitude of freedom could have produced.

The next work of Baxter's is connected with a long controversy on the subject of this chapter, in which Dr. Owen and some of his brethren were implicated. It appeared in several separate pamphlets, published under various titles, and at last with the following general title: 'Catholic Communion defended against both extremes; and unnecessary Division confuted by Reasons against both the active and passive ways of Separation.' 4to. 1684.

(t) Ibid.

(u) Baxter's 'Concord,' pp. 141, 142.

This work is divided into five parts, consisting of 'The dangerous Schismatic clearly detected and fully confuted;' in which Dr. Owen and Independency are the chief objects of animadversion. The second part is 'Against schism, and a book reported to be Mr. Raphson's,' in which the lawfulness of holding communion with the parish churches, is advocated by Baxter. The third is a 'Survey of the unreasonable defence of Dr. Stillingfleet for separation, pretending to oppose it;' in which Baxter defends himself and Mr. Humphreys against the charge of inconsistency, preferred by Dr. Sherlock and his party. They maintained that according to Baxter's principles, "if it be lawful to hear and communicate with the church once, it is lawful to do it constantly; and that if it be lawful to communicate with the church of England, it is unlawful to communicate with the Nonconformists." The fourth and fifth parts include his 'Catholic Communion defended and doubly defended, as they had before been published, or 'Reasons of the Author's censured Communion with the Parish Churches; and Reasons why Dr. John Owen's Twelve Arguments change not Richard Baxter's judgment.' Another part of the same discussion he also published in 1684: 'Catholic communion once more defended; or whether Parish Churches be true Christian Churches."

His own account of this controversy is as follows: "Seeing so many in prison for this error, to the dishonor of God, and so many more likely to be ruined by it, and the separating party, by the temptation of suffering, had so far prevailed with the most strict and zealous Christians, that a great number were of their mind; and the nonconformable ministers, whose judgment was against this separation, durst not publish their dislike of it, partly because of sharp and bitter censures of the Separatists, and partly for fear of losing all opportunity of teaching them; and some that had no hope of any other friends or maintenance, or auditors, thought they might be silent. On all these accounts, I that had no gathered church, nor lived on the contribution of any such, and was going out of the world in pain and languor, did think that I was fittest to bear men's censures, and to take that reproach on myself, which my brethren were less fit to bear, who might live for further service. So at the importunity of the bookseller, I consented to publish the reasons of my communicating in the parish churches, and against separation. Which, when it was coming out, a manuscript of Dr. Owen's, [x] who was lately dead, containing twelve arguments against such joining with the liturgy and public churches, was sent me, as

(x) The title of Owen's tract, here referred to, is 'An Answer to Two Questions, with Twelve Arguments against any Conformity to Worship, not of Divine Institution.' It appears to have been written by Owen for the use of some friend, and by him to have been printed.

that which had satisfied multitudes: I thought, that if this were unanswered, my labor would be much lost, because that party would still say, Dr. Owen's twelve arguments confuted all: whereupon, I hastily answered them, but found after, that it had been more prudent to have omitted his name. For, on that account, a swarm of revilers in the city poured out their keenest censures, and three or four wrote against me, whom I answered. I will not name the men that are known, and two of them are yet unknown; but they went on several principles, some charged all communion with the liturgy, with idolatry, anti-Christianity, perjury, and backsliding. One concealed his judgment, and quarrelled at my words. Another turned my treatise of Episcopacy against me, and said it fully proved the duty of separation. I was glad that I was hereby called to explain that treatise, lest it should do hurt to mistakers when I am dead; and that as in it I had said much against one extreme, I might leave my testimony against the other. I called all these writings together, 'A Defence of Catholic Communion.' And that I might be impartial, I adjoined two pieces against Dr. Sherlock, who ran quite into the contrary extremes, unchurching all Christians as schismatics. I confess I wtote so sharply against him, as must needs be liable to blame, with those that know not the man, and his former and latter virulent and ignorant writings." [y]

This is the most entangled of all the controversies in which Baxter engaged; as the titles of the same pamphlets vary in a way that makes it difficult to represent them correctly. To follow out the discussion, or to give a succinct account of it, would be useless and impracticable. The fact is simply this: Baxter was completely entangled between the church and the Independents, and the consistency of his principles and conduct was attacked by both parties. This he had himself provoked by various of his publications. He had, therefore, to defend his defences of the church, and his own separation from it; and to vindicate his defences of nonconformity, with the fact of his personal and stated conformity. His arguments often proved too much, if they proved any thing, and hence he became involved in difficulties from which, with all his acuteness and subtlety, it was impossible to extricate himself. It was thus, to adopt his own expressive language, "he made a wedge of his bare hand, by putting it into the cleft, and both sides closing upon it to his pain." "I have turned both parties," he says, "which I endeavored to part in the fray, against myself. When each side had but one adversary, I had two." [z]

While this unprofitable controversy went on, Dr. Owen, who had some share in it, or rather had been dragged into it, took

(y) Life, part iii. pp. 198, 199. (z) Cure of Church Div. p. 144.

his departure for a better world, where all is love and unity. In an appendix to his 'Reasons why Owen's Twelve Arguments' do not satisfy him, Baxter speaks of his character and talents in the most honorable terms, and supposes that if Owen had been permitted to address the disputers from his heavenly rest, it would be to this purpose :—

"Though all believers must be holy, and avoid all known wilful sin, they must not avoid one another, or their communion in good, because of adherent faults and imperfections; for Christ, who is most holy, receiveth persons and worship that are faulty, else none of us should be received. There is greatest goodness where there is greatest love and unity of spirit, maintained in the bond of peace. O call not to God to deny you mercy, by being unmerciful; nor to cast you all out, by casting off one another. O separate not all from Christ's church on earth, lest you separate from him, or displease him. God hath bid you pray, but not told you whether it shall be oft in the same words, or in other; with a book or without a book. Make not superstitiously a religion by pretending that God hath determined such circumstances. O do not preach and write down love and communion of saints, on pretence that your little modes and ways only are good, and theirs idolatrous or intolerable; and do not slander and excommunicate all, or almost all, Christ's body, and then wrong God by fathering this upon him. You pray, 'Thy will be done on earth as it is done in heaven;' why, here is no strife, division, disunion, animosity, sects, or factions, nor separating from, or excommunicating, one another. Learn of Christ, and separate from none further than they separate from him, and receive all that he receiveth. While you blame canonical dividers and unjust excommunicators, do not you renounce communion with tenfold more than they. I was, in this, of too narrow, mistaken principles; and, in the time of temptation I did not foresee to what church confusion and desolation, hatred and ruin, the dividing practices of some did tend; but the glorious unity, in heavenly perfection of love to God and one another, bids me beseech you to avoid all that is against it, and to make use of no mistakes of mine to cherish any such offences, or to oppose the motions of love, unity, and peace."

Owen's 'Twelve Arguments,' which Baxter took up so warmly, even after his death, do not appear to have been intended for the press by him. They were handed about in manuscript, and printed by some one when Owen was no longer capable of explaining or defending himself. The defence of the doctor was taken up very warmly by some of his friends. One writer, in the character of a vindicator, brought out two pamphlets: the former entitled 'A Vindication of the late Dr. Owen,' to which

Baxter replies in his 'Catholic Communion Doubly Defended.' To this the writer rejoined in his 'Vindiciæ Revindicatæ; being an answer to Mr. Baxter's Book; and Mr. Baxter's notions of the Saint's Repentance and Displeasure in Heaven considered.' 1684. 4to. The titles of several other of the pamphlets written in defence of Owen, I have given in the note below. [a]

About this same time, and evidently to aid him in the same cause, Baxter published, 'The Judgment of Sir Matthew Hale: of the Nature of true Religion, the Causes of its Corruption, and the Church's Calamity, by Men's Additions and Violence, with the Desired Cure.' 1684. 4to. The manuscript of the three discourses contained in this publication, had been given by Judge Hale to Baxter, who, after entertaining some doubts as to the propriety of publishing them, was at last, by the advice of his friends, induced to bring them out. They are not long, and hence do not enter very deeply into the important subjects of which they treat; but they afford a fine illustration of the wisdom and moderation of their author, and show that, were all religious men like Sir Matthew Hale, there would be no oppression on the one part, or unnecessary quarrels on the other; so that peace and love would prevail.

Baxter's 'sense of the subscribed articles of the church of England,' has already, in the last chapter of the first part of this work, been fully brought before the reader. I have also adverted to the union or agreement formed between the Presbyterians and Independents in 1691; and to the satisfaction which it appears to have afforded Baxter. Though then in the last stage of his mortal career, he published, with reference to it, 'Church Concord: containing a dissuasive from unnecessary divisions and separations; the real concord of the moderate Independents with the Presbyterians instanced in ten seeming differences; with the terms necessary for concord among all true churches and Christians.' 1691. 4to.

Among the last of Baxter's writings, there yet remains another treatise which belongs to the subject of this chapter.

(a) 'A Theological Dialogue, containing the Defence and Justification of Dr. J. Owen from Forty-two Errors, charged upon him by Mr. Richard Baxter, in a certain MS. about Communion in Liturgical Worship.' 1684. 4to.—'The Second Part of the Theological Dialogue; being a Reply to Mr. Richard Baxter,' 1684. 4to. Both the above are ascribed to John Faldo.—'Bellarminus Junior Enervatus; or, the Insufficiency of Mr. Richard Baxter's Answer to Dr. Owen's Twelve Arguments about Divine Worship detected,' &c. 1684. 4to. This is inscribed to Mr. Stephen Lobb. 'The Winding-Sheet for Mr. Baxter's Dead, &c.; with Twelve Queries concerning Separation, wherein the Reverend and Learned Dr. Owen is further vindicated.' This is ascribed to Mr. Morgan Lloyd, of Wrexham.—'Vindication of Dr. Owen, by a Friendly Scrutiny into the manner of Mr. Baxter's Opposition to Twelve Arguments concerning Worship by the Liturgy.' 1684. 4to. 'Insufficiency of Mr. Baxter's Answer to Dr. Owen's Twelve Arguments,' &c. 1684. 4to.

'Of National Churches; their description, institution, use, preservation, danger, maladies, and cure.' 1691. 4to. In this pamphlet he endeavors to prove that national churches are of Christ's institution; but when he comes to explain himself, the national church which he approves, is such as the world has never yet seen, nor is likely soon to see, unless more extraordinary changes take place than have yet occurred in the history of our planet. What will be the duty of Christians, when kings and rulers, with their subjects, shall in general be influenced by Christian principles, and under the direction of scriptural laws, it will be time enough to discuss when these things shall take place.

Baxter continued to look forward to some such mighty and glorious change: which induces me to place here, though not in the order in which the book occurred, his 'Moral Prognostication: First, What shall befall the Churches on Earth, till their Concord, by the Restitution of their Primitive Purity, Simplicity, and Charity. Secondly, How that Restitution is likely to be made, if ever, and what shall befall them thenceforth unto the end, in that golden age of love.'[b]

This tract was written in 1661, but not published till 1680. Had it been produced immediately before his death, it might have been regarded as insinuating something of a claim to prophetic foresight. Baxter, however, professed to be no prophet; but reasoning on certain principles, he considered himself justified in anticipating specific results. He professes great confidence, that God would in due time raise up some wise and spiritual king, who should discern the best method of promoting peace and union among all parties, and who should be eminently instrumental in advancing the interests of religion among men. It is not for us to say what will be; but judging from the past course of the divine proceedings, and the genius of Christianity, it is not likely that the kings of the earth are ever destined to be the great means of promoting and establishing the spiritual glory of the kingdom of Christ.

Having concluded the historical account of the numerous writings of our author, on the subject of catholic communion, it may now be necessary to state in a few words, what his sentiments on church government and communion, divested of all controversy, really were. As nearly as I can ascertain, I should judge they were as follows:

He held the necessity of maintaining social and church fellowship with all, who, in the judgment of charity, ought to be regarded as real Christians; but disapproved of holding communion with those who ought not be so considered. He ap-

(b) Works, vol. xv.

proved of a civil establishment of Christianity, and of the maintenance of the ministers by national funds; but it was only such an establishment as should leave the ministers unfettered and unembarrassed in their work; and which should neither too severely enforce the payment of tithes, nor much restrain any who dissented from it. He was opposed to tests and covenants of human framing, unless of the most general nature. He did not object to a moderate kind of episcopacy, which amounted, in fact, rather to a voluntary submission of the ministers of a district, to a constant but limited presidency, on the part of some one individual, on account of his age or some superior qualifications. While he contended for ministerial authority, he recognised the rights of a Christian congregation to choose its own pastor, and also to a certain share in the discipline of the church. He did not object to a liturgy, but to many parts of that used in the church. He also objected to the enforcement of it on any, and to strict adherence to it on all occasions. In short, he considered a Christian church to be an association of spiritual persons for their own good and the good of others; which ought to be aided and countenanced by the civil magistracy professing Christianity; but which should not be deprived of its own inherent and independent right to manage its own affairs, and to adapt its proceedings to its peculiar case and circumstances. Various other things were either contended for or objected to by him; but these positions may be considered as embracing the substance of the sentiments he advocated in his numerous writings for peace and love.

It is not my business to point out the defects or inconsistencies of his system or his practice, but to call the attention of the reader to what it really was. He lived during a period when much warmth and keenness were manifested on all the points which we have brought under review. He had to feel, or rather to fight his way on every point. There were few to assist him in the peculiar course he had marked out for himself, and, therefore, all due allowance must be made for the mistakes into which he fell.

With all his faults and imperfections, he was a man of a truly catholic spirit, who labored hard to heal the wounds that had been inflicted on the church by various means, and for which there seemed to be no cure. He acted as a pioneer, preparing the way for clearer statements than his own, and for a more correct system than has yet been generally adopted. His catholic principle of fellowship with all genuine Christians, is better understood than it was; though even yet, alas! but partially adopted as a principle, and still more imperfectly exemplified in practice. It implies not indifference to truth, but devoted attachment to it. It involves union without compromise, and

co-operation without sacrifice of consistency. It recognises the exclusive claims of divine authority in religion, and the unquestionable rights of conscience; securing for each individual the power of acting according to his own convictions, while it requires him to concede no less to others. It will ultimately effect what acts of uniformity have hitherto failed to produce, and which will never be brought about either by compulsory measures of state, or stormy controversies in the church. A greater portion of the spirit of Christ, and a brighter manifestation of his holy image, will do more to unite all his disciples, than the most perfect theory of church government that has yet been recommended, or forced on the world. When this blessed period of love and union shall arrive, the services of Baxter as the indefatigable advocate of catholic communion will not be forgotten.

CHAPTER VII.

WORKS ON NONCONFORMITY.

Introductory Observations on the History of Nonconformity—'The Nonconformist Papers'—Never answered—'Sacrilegious Desertion of the Ministry'—'The Judgment of Nonconformists of the Office of Reason in Matters of Religion'—'Of the Difference between Grace and Morality'—'About Things Indifferent'—'About things Sinful'—'What Mere Nonconformity is not'—'Nonconformist's Plea for Peace'—Second Part of Ditto—Defence of Ditto—Correspondence with Tillotson—'Answer to Dr. Stillingfleet'—'Second Defence of the Mere Nonconformist'—'Search for the English Schismatic'—'Treatise of Episcopacy'—'Third Defence of the Cause of Peace'—'Apology for the Nonconformists' Ministry'—'English Nonconformity'—Conclusion.

The distinction which I have made between the works of Baxter on Catholic Communion and Church Government, and those on the Nonconformist controversy, may appear to some merely a refinement, and that the publications thus distinguished, belong all to one class. Attention to the nature of many of these works, however, will show that this is not correct. The subjects, it is true, do frequently shade into each other; but they are substantially distinct. Many of the publications on church government might have been written, though the question of nonconformity had never been agitated; while that question, on the other hand, involved many points, which are altogether independent of particular views of church polity. The distinction will, at all events, be convenient, as it enables us to separate the

voluminous writings of our author on subjects very closely connected, but which, if treated under one head, would have been tiresome both to the writer and to the reader.

Nonconformity is a relative term. It supposes some previously existing system of observances, established either by political authority, or general consent; and denotes a practical secession on grounds conceived by the parties to require and justify it. Like the term Protestantism, it is general and comprehensive. It applies to various grounds of secession from the national religion, and includes different systems of ecclesiastical polity. No wise man would choose to differ from those around him, in reference to matters either civil or religious, unless in his own estimation he had good reasons for that difference; and in such cases it is the obvious dictate of duty to investigate the questions at issue, with calmness and deliberation; that conviction and not caprice, principle and not passion, may regulate the inquiry, and form the decision. [c]

The Nonconformist controversy is a very unattractive subject to many persons. They regard it as a debate about words, and names, and questions, which gender strife, rather than godly edifying. Assuming either that there is no authority or standard in such matters, or that the authority of certain ecclesiastical superiors ought to be submitted to without murmuring or disputing, they pronounce their disapprobation on all discussions of such subjects, and on the parties who engage in them. High churchmen are offended that the doctrine of conformity should be called in question at all. Those who profess high spirituality, look on the subject as unworthy of their regard, and as only fit for such as mind the carnal things of the kingdom of God. Dissenters, as well as others, frequently talk of it as being among nonessential matters, and scarcely deserving of profound consideration, and while they luxuriate in the privileges which their forefathers purchased for them at so dear a rate, almost pity and condemn the measures which procured them.

Without professing that the highest consideration attaches to the Nonconformist controversy, or approving of all the views or conduct of the early Nonconformists, I can by no means regard the subject as one of small importance. In a life of Baxter, it is necessarily a prominent subject, and no apology can be requisite for treating it fully in an account of one who was the most moderate of all the Nonconformists, while he wrote in defence of his brethren and their cause, more than they all. But, independently of its connexion with Baxter, the subject has strong claims to dispassionate and careful examination.

It is impossible for any one to form a correct view of English

(c) See a very able Sermon on Nonconformity, by the Rev. Joseph Fletcher, A. M.

history for nearly three hundred years, without an acquaintance with this controversy, and with the characters and principles of the men who engaged in it. It is almost co-eval with the English Reformation; and the great questions then started cannot be considered as yet finally determined. The Puritans under the Tudors, became Nonconformists under the Stuarts, and Dissenters under the family of Hanover. They have been men of the same principles substantially throughout. In maintaining the rights of conscience, they have contributed more than any other class of persons to set limits to the power of the crown, to define the rights of subjects, and to secure the liberties of Britain. They have wrested a rod of iron from the hand of despotism, and substituted in its place a sceptre of righteousness and mercy. They have converted the divine right of kings into the principles of a constitutional government, in which the privileges of the subject are secured by the same charter which guards the throne. The history of the principles of such a body ought not, therefore, to be regarded as unimportant by any friends of British freedom.

The Nonconformist controversy contributed greatly to ascertain the distinct provinces of divine and human legislation; to establish the paramount and exclusive authority of God, and of the revelation of his will, over the conscience of man; and to define the undoubted claims of civil government to the obedience of its subjects in all matters purely civil. It is not alleged that all, or even the majority of the Nonconformist, clearly understood the doctrine of religious liberty. But they, and the Puritans who preceded them, were men of conscience themselves, who could not submit to human dictation when it interfered with what they believed God required; so that, though they did not perceive the full bearings of their own principles, and sometimes acted and wrote inconsistently with them, they remonstrated, resisted, and suffered, when kings and bishops commanded them to fall down and worship the idols which they had set up. From this contest and struggle truth derived great advantage. The untenable and unrighteous exactions of authority were exposed, the supreme authority of the Scriptures maintained, and the rights of conscience at last established. The mist and darkness which had so long covered one of the first and greatest principles of legislation, were gradually cleared away, and in due time that principle stood forth before the world, as no longer to be disputed—that man is accountable to God only, for all that he believes as truth, for all that he offers as worship, and for all that he practises as religion. This is the doctrine of the Bible, the dictate of enlightened reason; and lies at the foundation of all correct and acceptable obedience to God.

To the same controversy we are indebted for the origin of the correct and scriptural sentiments which are now extensively entertained respecting the unsecular nature of the kingdom of Christ. The intermixture of heavenly and earthly things does indeed still prevail, and its pernicious tendency is yet imperfectly estimated by many; but considerable progress has been made towards the full discovery of the entire spirituality of Messiah's kingdom. Its independence of secular support and defence, its resources both of propagation and maintenance, its uncongeniality with the principles, spirit, and practices of earth-born men, are now much more generally admitted than they once were. In fact, the ablest defenders of ecclesiastico-civil establishments, have now entirely abandoned the doctrine of divine right, and boldly avow that they are no part of Christianity, but only a human expedient for its propagation. Many of the Nonconformists, and Baxter in particular, were sticklers for an establishment. They did not clearly understand what was involved in their own principles; but in maintaining a warfare against the introduction of ungodly men into the ministry, and the neglect of ecclesiastical discipline; and in contending for the rights of the church, independently of the will of the civil magistrate, they prepared the way for better and clearer views than those which they themselves maintained.

With this controversy too, there was often incorporated the defence or the assertion of some of the most important doctrines of the Gospel. These the adversaries of the Nonconformists in general very imperfectly understood. Indeed, enmity to salvation by grace, to justification by faith, election, perseverance, with their collateral truths, was often at the root of the opposition and persecution which had to be endured. There were doctrinal Puritans and Nonconformists, who would not have scrupled at most of the forms of the church, but who regarded its leaders as among the most deadly enemies to those great essential truths which intimately belong to the salvation of men.

There have been High Church and Low Church, which are only different expressions for Puritan and Anti-Puritan, Conformist and Nonconformist, ever since the Reformation. In the reign of Edward, Cranmer and Ridley headed the one class, Rogers and Hooper the other. Though all four died at the stake for the common faith, the two last had suffered severely from the two former, on account of their opposition to certain imposed rites and ceremonies. In the days of Mary, both parties fled into foreign countries for security. But, even when in exile, the former stiffly adhered to the ceremonies which they had endeavored to impose when at home, while the latter, availing themselves of the privilege of strangers, as resolutely refused to submit to them. This created no small dissension

between the parties while abroad. On their return, after the advancement of Elizabeth to the throne, each hoped to carry their point. Those who were zealous for rites and usages, however, gained the queen's favor; their views being more in unison with her arbitrary disposition, and her love of pomp, in religious as well as in civil matters. But although the other party were disappointed, they were not entirely thrown out. As there was a great deficiency of properly qualified persons to occupy the pulpits and principal places in the establishment, many of those who were known to be opposed to some of its ritual, were allowed to officiate in the churches, and their noncompliance, with parts of the rubric, was connived at. Some of them were also raised to dignified offices. In the course of her reign, however, the bonds were gradually drawn tighter and tighter, and very severe sufferings came to be inflicted on a body of excellent and conscientious men.

What is said of the Israelites in Egypt, may be said with justice of the Puritans,—the more they were afflicted, the more they multiplied and grew. The severities they experienced only increased their resolution to submit to no human impositions in religion, to resist encroachments on conscience, and added to their influence among those who respected men suffering for conscience' sake. Nothing but the energy and vigilance of Elizabeth's government prevented very serious disturbances in the country from these causes. Parliament would more than once have given relief, but was prevented from doing so, by the archbishop, and his influence over the queen. In her last days, when the nation was beginning to worship the rising sun, some abatement took place; but still the conflict went on.

A vigorous attempt was made by the Puritans, at the beginning of James's reign, to accomplish a further reformation of the church, and to secure liberty for those who conscientiously scrupled to observe some of its rites, though they wished still to remain within its pale. James's hatred of Presbyterianism, which he transported across the Tweed, defeated this project. The canons formed by the convocation, under his direction, increased instead of mitigating the evils under which the Puritans groaned; and during the whole of his reign, and that of his unfortunate son and successor, matters gradually grew worse and worse, till they finally came to a grand crisis.

The pontificate of Laud was a great means of accelerating that conflict, in which he lost his head. The *conforming* Puritans were in his time severely dealt with. If they did not bow to the altar, would not read the book of sports, or were guilty of the crime of holding lectures, or of preaching twice on the Lord's-day, it was enough to bring them before the high-

commission court, and subject them to all its oppressive and iniquitous censures. The consequences were, that multitudes of the ablest ministers, and of the best of the people, left their native country, and fled for an asylum to the wilds and deserts of America. At last, oppression brought the country to desperation, and in the struggle which ensued, both the church and the monarchy were wrecked.

There was religious peace, but not general satisfaction, during the Protectorate. The friends of the fallen church were still numerous; the lovers of form and ceremony in religion were not few, though they were silent and sullen. The opponents of the hierarchy were divided among themselves; the largest fragment, the Presbyterian, opposed themselves to all the sectaries, were enamored with an established church, and not as a body inimical to a certain species of episcopal government.

When Charles II. was restored, the episcopal establishment, as a matter of course, was reinstated in all its rights and privileges; and the body of the ministers who were attached to a simpler, and what they regarded a more scriptural form of religion, were driven away. The vast majority of these persons did not decidedly object to a modified episcopacy—to a liturgical form of worship, and to the use of various rites, provided they were not absolutely imposed on their consciences as matters of faith and scriptural practice. They were mostly believers in the lawfulness of a civil establishment of Christianity, and consequently were not dissenters from the church; they only objected to certain things belonging to, or imposed by it.

These observations, with the history of the events of Baxter's life, in the former part of this work, will enable the reader to understand the nature of his writings on the subject of Nonconformity. Their great objects were, to state the evils of which he and his friends complained, as belonging to the episcopal system established in this country; to assign the grounds of their conscientious objections to that system; to explain what alterations would satisfy them, and the reasonableness of demanding those alterations; and to defend himself and brethren from many charges falsely or ignorantly preferred against them. It would be an almost endless, and certainly a useless task, to analyse all these works, or minutely to enter into their diversified contents; but I shall endeavor to convey to the reader some idea of their nature, and of the controversies which they involved, or of which they formed a part.

The first of these works, which deserves our attention, though not entirely Baxter's production, nor bearing his name, is the collection of papers which passed between the commissioners at the Savoy, in 1661. Of that debate, a full account has been

given in the former part of this work. We have now to do only with the publication, and with the part which Baxter had in it.

It appeared in 1661, with the following title: 'An account of all the proceedings of the commissioners of both persuasions, appointed by his sacred majesty, according to letters patent for the review of the Book of Common Prayer,' &c. 4to.

On the first appearance of this volume, which had no name attached to it, it was at once imputed to Baxter, though he was then a hundred miles off, and knew nothing at all about it. It contained only some of the documents, and these very inaccurately printed. The rest followed afterwards. Baxter supposed they were published by a poor man, whom he paid for writing a copy of the papers. The complete collection consists of the following documents: 1. Two papers of proposals concerning the discipline and ceremonies of the church of England, presented to King Charles II. by the Presbyterian ministers. 2. Their petition for peace to the bishops. 3. Their reformation of the liturgy. 4. An account of the proceedings of the commissioners on both sides for reviewing the Book of Common Prayer; with the king's commission prefixed. 5. The exceptions of the Presbyterians against the liturgy. 6. The papers which passed between the commissioners, in which the matter is argued *pro* and *con*. 7. A true copy of the disputation at the Savoy, as managed by the episcopal divines, to prove that there is nothing sinful in the liturgy. 8. An account of the debate and petition to the king, by the Presbyterian ministers who were appointed commissioners. 9. Archbishop Usher's reduction of episcopacy to the form of synodical government, and another paper.[d] Of these documents, Baxter was the exclusive author, of Nos. 2 and 3, besides having a principal hand in most of the others. In his own Life, the greater number of these documents are published, with a very full account of all that took place at the conference. Those who would be masters of the Nonconformist controversy, must study these papers, especially keeping in eye Usher's model, to which the moderate Presbyterians constantly referred, as that which would satisfy them.

"Their publication," says Baxter, "had various effects; it increased the burning indignation which before was kindled against me on one side, and it somewhat mitigated the censures that were taken up against me on the other side. For the chief of the Congregational or Independent party took it ill that we took not them with us in our treaty, and so did a few of the Presbyterian divines, all whom we so far passed by as not to invite them to our councils; partly because we knew that

(d) These documents were all printed together in an 8vo. volume, in 1704. The title is—'The History of Nonconformity, as it was argued and stated by Commissioners on both sides, in 1661.'

it would be but a hinderance to us; partly because their persons were unacceptable; and partly because it might have delayed the work. Most of the Independents, and some few Presbyterians, raised it as a common censure against us, that if we had not been so forward to meet the bishops with the offers of so much at first, and to enter into a treaty with them without just cause, we had all had better terms, and that standing off would have done more good: so that though my *person* and *intentions* had a more favorable censure from them than some others, yet for the action, I was commonly censured by them, as one that had granted them too much, and wronged my brethren by entering into this treaty, out of too earnest a desire of concord with them. Thus were men on both extremes offended with me; and I found what enmity, charity, and peace, are likely to meet with in the world. But when these papers were printed, the Independents confessed that we had dealt faithfully and satisfactorily: and indifferent men said that reason had overwhelmed the cause of the diocesans, and that we had offered them so much as left them utterly without excuse. The moderate episcopal men said the same; but the engaged Prelatists were vehemently displeased, that these papers should thus come abroad."[e]

The Episcopalians threatened, on the appearance of the papers, to answer them; but no regular or formal answer ever appeared. Roger L'Estrange often sneered at them. An anonymous writer, supposed to be Bishop Womack, referred to one of the papers; and Sir Henry Yelverton, in another anonymous pamphlet, written in defence of Bishop Morley, alluded to them. These, however, deserve not to be regarded as answers. If the church had been in a state of suffering after the Savoy conference, replies would have been produced in abundance; but as she was in full possesion of power, it was thought the wisest course to reply to the Nonconformists in acts of parliament, rather than in pamphlets.

The times did not admit of Baxter publishing anything after the Savoy conference, on the subject of Nonconformity, till 1672, when he brought out a small 12mo volume, entitled 'Sacrilegious Desertion of the Holy Ministry Rebuked, and Tolerated Preaching of the Gospel Vindicated.' This work appeared anonymously, and was intended as an answer to a book entitled 'Toleration not to be Abused,' which also was without a name, but is ascribed by Baxter to Dr. Fullwood; who appears to have grudged the temporary liberty which his brethren then

(e) Life, part ii. pp. 378, 380. The most complete collection of the papers is to be found in Baxter's own Life, as none had copies of several of them there published but himself. As documents, they afford important illustration of the principles and temper of both parties.

enjoyed, or to have been greatly afraid of the abuse of liberty. Baxter argues very justly, that as the Nonconformists had been ordained to the ministry, if they could not obtain a legal right or establishment, it was their duty to preach when they were merely tolerated, and that desertion of the work would be both pusillanimous and sinful. "Dr. Fullwood," he tells us, "wrote a jocular, deriding answer to this treatise; and also printed an assize sermon against separating from the parish ministers. Divers called on me to reply to the first; but I told them I had better work to do than to answer every script against me; and while I demurred, Dr. Fullwood sent me an extraordinary kind letter, offering to do his best to the Parliament for our union and restoration, which ended my thoughts of that; but I knew not anything to the purpose done."[f]

At the end of this little work there is a chapter containing an humble petition to the Conformists, in which Baxter expostulates with them in the most affectionate and solemn manner; imploring them not to take offence, because their brethren who seceded from the church, could not entirely agree with them; disclaiming all hostility, and only entreating for himself and others, liberty to act according to their consciences, in doing what they regarded as the will of God.

An answer was published to this book, somewhat corresponding to the character given of Fullwood's performance, entitled 'Speculum Baxterianum, or Baxter against Baxter; being Reflections on a Treatise,' &c.; but as it did not appear till 1680, I suppose it is not the pamphlet to which Baxter here refers. It consists chiefly of quotations from the numerous publications of Baxter, in which he appears, or is made, to contradict himself. Nothing could be easier than this. "Who the author of the 'Speculum' is," says Baxter, "I know not, the subject calleth me to no particular answer. He mistook the question, as if it had been what the world should think of me. In which I leave them to their liberty without much contradiction."[g]

In 1676, he printed a pamphlet on the 'Judgment of Nonconformists, concerning the part or office of reason in religion,' which, he says, had good acceptance, having been published with the consent of many ministers. Encouraged by this, in the same year, he printed together four treatises, 'The Judgment of the Nonconformists about the difference between grace and morality;' 'Their Judgment of things indifferent commanded by authority;' 'Their Judgment of things sinful by accident;' and 'What Mere Nonconformity is not.' Some of these treatises were written in 1668, and some of them shortly

(f) Life, part iii. p. 102. (g) Preface to the 'Third Defence of Peace.'

after; but his prudent friends persuaded him to lay them aside, as unsuitable to the state and temper of the times. The first of them is intended to obviate some objections raised against the Nonconformists, as if they differed from others, not merely on the subject of Conformity, but on that of religion generally, and held some strange notions about grace and morality. The second relates to the question which was started at the Savoy conference, and which led to so much debating afterwards; 'Whether things antecedently lawful, do therefore become unlawful, because commanded by lawful authority.' This it was maintained the Nonconformists affirmed, but which Baxter denies. It is easy to perceive, that it is a very ensnaring question viewed abstractly, and that much must depend on the use which the parties would be disposed to make of the answer, whether in the affirmative or the negative. The third treatise, 'Of things sinful by accident,' arose out of the same conference; and is designed to show, that things in themselves lawful, may become sinful by the accidental circumstances to which they happen sometimes to be related. For example, there may be nothing sinful in the Book of Common Prayer; but if men are required to use it as an act of submission to *human* authority, and for improper reasons assigned by it; and if the use of it is understood to be an acknowledgment of that authority, or of the justice of the reasons which it assigns, it becomes then absolutely unlawful to every man, who conscientiously objects to the authority enjoining it. Much of the Nonconformist controversy hangs on this question; which would not seem to be of very difficult solution.

The last treatise on what 'Mere Nonconformity is not,' was designed to strip the question of many of those adjuncts which were regarded as more or less inseparable from it. It is not difficult to define mere Nonconformity; but very difficult to say who were the *mere* Nonconformists for whom Baxter wrote. Those who left the church of England, or who were driven from it, were influenced in their conduct by a vast variety of considerations. Baxter could not always satisfy others by the exposition of his own sentiments, still less would he be likely to satisfy them in his account of the sentiments of his brethren. Some objected that he went too far; others, that he did not go far enough; so that what *mere* Nonconformity is, must be ascertained by other means than this pamphlet.

When these treatises were printed, some of his political friends in parliament and elsewhere, were against their publication; conceiving they would increase, rather than mitigate the sufferings of the Nonconformists, by exasperating the church, and offending the other sects; he therefore suppressed them,

after they had cost him twenty-three pounds.[h] They afterwards appeared along with the second part of his 'Nonconformists' Plea for Peace.'

In 1679, he published 'The Nonconformists' Plea for Peace; or, an Account of their Judgment, in certain things in which they are misunderstood.' 8vo. The act restraining the press being expired, he says, "I published a book that lay by me, to open the case of Nonconformity, which greatly offended many Conformists; though I ventured no further, but to name the things that we durst not conform to. Even the same men that had long called out to us, to tell them what we desired; and who said we had nothing to say, could not bear it. The bishop of Ely, Dr. Gunning, told me, he would petition authority to command us to give the reasons of our nonconformity, and not thus keep up schism, and give no reason for it. The bishop of London, Dr. Crompton, told me, that the king took us to be not sincere for not giving the reasons of our dissent. I told them both, it was a strange expectation from men that had so fully given their reasons against the old conformity in their reply, and could get no answer; and when their own laws would excommunicate, imprison, and ruin us for doing any such thing as they demanded. But I would beg it on my knees, and return them most hearty thanks, if they would but procure us leave to do it. Yet when it was but half done, it greatly provoked them; and they wrote and said, that without the least provocation I had assaulted them; whereas, I only named what we stuck at, professing to accuse none of them; and they thought seventeen years' silencing, persecuting, imprisoning, accusations of parliament-men, prelates, priests, and people, and all their calls, (what would you have? why do you not tell us what you stick at?) to be no provocation. Yea, bishops and doctors had long told great men, that I myself had said it was only things inconvenient, and not things sinful, which I refused to conform to; whereas, I had given them in the description of eight particular things in the old conformity which I undertook to prove sinful. At the Savoy we began with one of them, and in the petition for peace, we offered our oaths, that we would refuse conformity to nothing but what we took to be sin. And now when I told them what the sins were, O! what a common storm did it raise among them; when heathens would have fit men speak for themselves before they are condemned, it is criminal in us to do it seventeen years after."[i]

Before the publication of this volume, the Nonconformists had been assailed, reproached, and challenged, in a multitude of books. Baxter tells us that he had read the publications of

(h) Life, part iii. p. 35.

(i) Ibid. part iii. p. 187.

"Bishop Morley, Messrs. Stileman, Fullwood, Durel, Fowlis, Falkener, Nanfen, Boreman, Parker, Tompkins, Ashton, Hollingworth, Good, Hinkley, L'Estrange, Long, the 'Friendly Debate,' the 'Counterminer,' and many more." In these performances they were accused of being adversaries of peace, lovers of contentions, guilty of schism, sedition, and all uncharitableness. The 'Plea for Peace' was intended to meet all these charges, and to lay the true grounds of Nonconformity before the world. It is therefore both a defensive and an offensive work. He argues strenuously against conformity on the ground of the matters imposed, particularly on the ministers; the assent, consent, approbation, and canonical subscription required from them. Re-ordination, the oath requiring them never to seek any alteration of church government, and many other things, furnish him with arguments in support of his Nonconformity, which no Conformist had ever satisfactorily met; and which most dissenters believe have never yet been answered. There is much historical matter mixed up with the argument of this book, tracing the progress of Nonconformity from the beginning to the period to which it was written.

It seems from his own account, however, as if he had been obliged to write this book, in consequence of the conduct of mistaken friends, as much as the provocation of avowed enemies. "Two old friends," he says, "whom I had a hand in turning from anabaptistry and separation, Mr. Thomas Lamb and Mr. William Allen, who had followed John Goodwin, and became pastors of an Anabaptist church; though but tradesmen, fell on writing against separation, more strongly than any of the conformable clergy. In consequence of their old error, they now ran into the other extreme, especially Mr. Lamb. They wrote against our gathering assemblies, and preaching when we were silenced; against whose mistakes I wrote 'The Nonconformists, Plea for Peace.'"[k]

It is somewhat amusing to find Baxter employing himself with all his energy, to make separatists churchmen, and churchmen separatists; and then finding that he could not manage them upon his own principles. Allen and Lamb, and his wife Barbara, appear to have been among the most troublesome and voluminous of his correspondents. Sylvester has swelled out his folio volume by printing some of the letters that passed between them. He might have added many more of the same description. It is wonderful Baxter, great as his patience was, should have been capable of reading and answering the letters with which they plagued him. It is probable that he at last wrote this book, if possible, to get rid of them.[l]

(k) Life, part iii. p. 180.

l) Life, App. No. iii. Baxter MSS. These persons, after having been Bap-

A reply to this work was published by a clergyman of the name of Cheney, under the affected and ridiculous title of 'The Conforming-Nonconformist, and the Nonconforming-Conformist.' Whether this was intended to describe one person or two, seems doubtful; but the ambiguity of the title is removed by the work, which is a weak attempt to show how men may subscribe and swear without believing anything in the sense of the imposers; like the device of the Roman slave, "Jurari linguâ, mente jurari nihil." Cheney "was afraid some one would write against Baxter, and neither convince the Nonconformists, nor do justice to Conformity;" and therefore he wrote a book which did neither. Cheney and Baxter were acquainted. Baxter considered him an honest, weak man, who had attempted what was beyond his powers; but seemed intended only as a precursor of some mightier wight who was to follow.

The second part of 'The Nonconformists' Plea for Peace,' appeared in a 4to volume early in 1680. It contains, beside the four treatises formerly mentioned as printed in 1676, an account of the principles of the Nonconformists, in regard to civil and ecclesiastical authority and obedience; and a vindication of them from the charges of rebellion, killing the king, and creating anarchy in the nation, and schism in the church. It is rather a strange but tedious melange of politics and theology; the former not always very consistent with just views of British constitutional liberty. Though Baxter should have held what may be called the popular view of the constitution, to justify his own conduct, this was not altogether the case; and yet he expresses himself in this performance in a way that could not be acceptable to the friends of arbitrary power. In this, as in some other things, he endeavored to steer a middle course, in consequence of which, he gave offence to both parties, without succeeding in accomplishing his own object. In avoiding Scylla, he fell into Charybdis, the invariable fate of those who engage in party discussions, and vainly imagine that a selection of some things, which are held by both sides, and the rejection of others, is the golden medium of truth and peace.

To prevent Cheney's book from doing mischief, though it was not deserving of attention on account of its own merits, Baxter published 'The Defence of the Nonconformists' Plea for Peace.' 8vo. 1680. No employment can well be more dull and uninteresting than that of answering a man who is incapable, from want of sense or want of honesty, of stating correctly the matter in dispute. Cheney may have been very honest in his

tists, and members, for many years, of John Goodwin's church, afterwards became high Conformists. Allen appears to have been a man of talents; he wrote several pieces on doctrinal and practical theology, which were collected in a folio volume, published in 1707, with a preface by the Bishop of Chichester, and a sermon on the death of the author, by Bishop Kidder.

intentions; but he must have been prodigiously stupid, as a great part of Baxter's employment in answering him consists in correcting his mis-statements of matter of fact, or palpable misrepresentations of the whole question at issue between the Church and the Nonconformists.

An adversary of a higher order, both in talents and in the church, shortly afterwards appeared in the person of Dr. Stillingfleet, then dean of St. Paul's, and afterwards bishop of Worcester. He had formerly written an *Irenicum*, to reconcile the contending parties, by an attempt to show that no form of church government is to be found in the New Testament. [m] On the second of May, 1680, he preached a sermon before the lord mayor, which he afterwards published by request, with the title of the 'Mischief of Separation.' This discourse was like the firing of a signal gun at the commencement of a general engagement. Both parties had been preparing for battle for some time. The Church was becoming increasingly indignant that neither time nor perescution had destroyed the seceders from her pale; while the Nonconformists, worn out with long-continued suffering, and wearied with restraining, were glad of an opportunity to give vent to their feelings in the vindication of their cause.

Stillingfleet's sermon imputes most unjustly to the Nonconformists all the blame of separation from the church, and the mischiefs which had arisen from it. He makes no proper allowance for their conscientious objections to the exercise of an imposing power, and to the unscriptural nature of the things imposed; for the harshness and severity of the treatment which they had experienced; or for the exasperating effects of their unmerited sufferings. He was no longer "Rector of Sutton," but the "Dean of St. Paul's;" and had now laid aside his "weapon salve for the church's wounds," to employ another weapon to irritate and increase them. It is too generally forgotten on the side of the church, that the sin of separation may belong to those who are in, as much as to those who are out: by the former imposing a yoke which neither free men nor Christians ought to be called to wear; and, therefore, the mischiefs, how many, or how great soever they may be, belong not all to one side.

Of the Stillingfleet controversy I have given a particular account, in the 'Memoirs of Dr. Owen;' to which I must refer

(m) The 'Irenicum' was first published in 1659, when the church was in a state of depression and suffering, and her wounds required to be healed by the salve of concession and moderation. Stillingfleet afterwards repented of writing this book. "There are many things in it," he says, "which, if he were to write again, he would not say; some which show his youth, and want of due consideration; others, which he yielded too far, in hopes of gaining the dissenting parties to the church of England."

the reader who wishes for information respecting the several parties who engaged in it. I shall now confine myself, in a great measure, to the publications of Baxter, who labored more abundantly than all the others.

The Dean's sermon appears to have produced a strong impression on Baxter's mind. Dr. Hicks mentions that a friend of his calling shortly after its publication on Dr. Cox,[n] there found Mr. Baxter vehemently inveighing against it; which led the gentleman to ask him, why he was so severe upon that sermon and its author, and took no notice of another, then newly come out, which had given the men of his party as much offence. What sermon is that? said Baxter. Dr. Tillotson's (the dean of Canterbury's) court sermon; in which he tells you "that you must not affront the established religion, nor openly draw men off from the profession of it." "Oh," replied Mr. Baxter, "he gave us great offence indeed; but he hath cried *peccavi*, and made us satisfaction. But your other dean, is a proud, haughty man, and will retract nothing."

Dr. Birch doubts the fact of Tillotson's crying *peccavi* to the dissenters. It is very clear, however, from Calamy's Life of Howe, that he was exceedingly sorry for having preached and published that sermon; the main argument of which is subversive of Protestantism, and indeed of Christianity itself. On its publication, Baxter drew up a treatise on the subject, and sent it in manuscript to the dean. It produced the following letter from him in answer; which illustrates the amiable character of Tillotson; shows the esteem in which he held Baxter, and saved the latter from a public controversy with him. It shows, also, the probable ground on which Baxter spoke of Tillotson's confession.

"Reverend Sir, June 2nd, 1680.

"I received your letter, and the papers inclosed, which having perused, I do now return. I cannot think myself to be really much concerned in them, because they grant all along that the obligation of duty ceaseth, where there is no probability of success: and this principle is the true ground and bottom of my assertion. So that unless upon the same principle opposite conclusions can be built, there must be some mistake in the reasoning of one side. But whether I be really concerned in it or not, I have great reason to think that it will generally be believed that this discourse is particularly designed against me, and that the same malice, which raised so groundless a clamor

(n) Dr. Cox was the husband of Mrs. Mary Cox, for whom Baxter preached a funeral sermon.—See *Works*, vol. xvii. p. 91. He was the particular friend of Baxter, as appears from his interferences on his behalf on various occasions. He rose to the head of his profession, being president of the College of Physicians till 1683, when he was deprived of the office for being whiggishly inclined.

against my late sermon, will be very glad to find me struck at in the odious company of Spinosa and Mr. Hobbes, as of the same atheistical principles with them; a blow which I least expected, and for that reason should be very much surprised to receive from your hand. I would be glad to meet with that kindness and candor which I have ever used towards others; but if that may not be, I must content myself with the conscience of having endeavored to deserve well of all men, and of the truth itself. I am, Sir, with great sincerity, as I have always been,

"Your affectionate Friend and Servant,
JOHN TILLOTSON."[o]

The first thing Baxter published in this controversy was, his 'Answer to Dr. Edward Stillingfleet's Charge of Separation.' 1680. 4to. In this pamphlet he publishes a correspondence which took place between Stillingfleet and himself, occasioned by the dean's sermon. He inserts some queries which he proposed to the dean, to elicit a more explicit account of the accusation; a reply to the letter which Stillingfleet wrote him, declining to answer these queries, and an answer to the printed sermon. There is one passage in this reply to Stillingfleet, in which Baxter poses him with the doctrine of his former work in a way that he must have found very unpalatable. It is an unanswerable reply to all who give up the *jus divinum*, and yet found a charge of schism or separation on those who dissent from them.

"I remember, your Irenicum learnedly maintaineth, that God hath instituted no one form of church government as necessary. And if so, then not a national church form. And is it not a complete church if it be without a form, which not God, but man, is the author of? Then God made or instituted no such thing as a complete church. Then is it a human creation? Then why may not man make yet many forms, and multiply, and make, and unmake, as he seeth cause; and several countries have several forms? And *formæ dat nomen et esse*. And if God made not any complete church, we should be acquainted who they be that had power to make a first church form; and who hath the power ever since; and how it is proved, and how it cometh to be any great matter to separate from a church form which God never made; and whether human church forms be not essential and constitutive causes of the churches. Whether every commanded oath, subscription, declaration, office, or ceremony, be an essential part of this church form. Whether there be as many church forms and

(o) Birch's Life of Tillotson, p. 419.

species, as there be orders, liturgies, and ceremonies. And whether all these differences in the same kingdom, constitute so many schisms and separations."

Stillingfleet took up Baxter and his other antagonists in his 'Unreasonableness of Separation;' a large quarto volume published in 1681. In this work, he professes to give an historical account of the separation from the church of England, and of the various pleas advanced in support of that separation by the several parties, with such answers as he considered satisfactory, or which exposed, as he conceived, the inconsistency of his leading opponents. Stillingfleet was a man of profound learning, and distinguished abilities. He spared no pains in this discussion to establish his main position,—that the dissenters had very unreasonably separated from the church of England. He succeeds chiefly in exposing the inconsistency of some of their arguments with their other principles and some parts of their conduct. But, in this, he had no particular reason to triumph, as his own consistency was very far from perfect. The rector of Sutton, who wrote the Irenicum when the church of England was but a sect among other sects, was a very different person from the dean of St. Paul's, exposing the unreasonableness of separation from an apostolic church in all its glory. The one publication breathes a spirit of moderation, and uses the language of entreaty; the other is stern, severe, and uncompromising.

While Baxter was preparing to meet Stillingfleet, he was assailed by several other adversaries, in reply to whom he produced, 'A Third Defence of the Cause of Peace, proving the Need of Concord and the Impossibility of it on the Terms of the Present Impositions.' 8vo. 1681. This volume contains, first: a reply to John Hinckley, D. D., rector of Northfield, Worcestershire, and prebendary of Wolverhampton. He had published, in 1680, '*Fasciculus Literarium;* or, Letters on several occasions, betwixt Mr. Baxter and the Author of the Persuasive to Conformity.' This volume contains four letters of Hinckley's, and four from Baxter in reply, on the subject of Nonconformity, which had heen written several years before. It is to the last of Hinckley's letters in this book, that Baxter replies in his 'Defence.' The controversy between them is a very sharp one; there is a large portion of history in Baxter's answer.

The second thing in the 'Defence,' is an answer to another silly production of Cheney's, 'A Fardel of Dotage and shameless Lies;' which was not therefore deserving of the attention Baxter bestowed on it.

The third thing in the 'Defence,' is 'Truth Pleading for Peace, against the many Falsehoods of an unnamed Impleader, who pretendeth to answer several writings of Richard Baxter.'

This nameless impleader was Long, of Exeter, the sworn foe of Baxter. 'The Nonconformists' Plea for Peace impleaded, is in the character of all his other publication against Baxter and his brethren, and was accordingly treated by him as it deserved. There is also a short note on a book against the dissenters, by a person by the name of Varney; and a few remarks on the 'Speculum,' and the 'Casuist Uncased,' of Roger L'Estrange. "Mr. L'Estrange," he says, "quite mistakes the Nonconformist question, as the Reflector does; as if hissing and stinging were disputing. He seemeth to make the question to be, Whether I be not a giddy, mutable fool and knave. Let him in that believe what pleases himself. Our question is, whether silencing, fining, imprisoning the Nonconformists, be the way of peace, and of the desired concord of Protestants? Yea, whether concord be possible on those terms, and whether they will ever end our divisions?"

In reply to the elaborate performance of Stillingfleet, Baxter published 'A Second True Defence of the Mere Nonconformists, against the untrue accusations, reasonings, and history of Dr. Edward Stillingfleet.' 1681. 4to. In this volume, he endeavors to prove that it is "not a sin but a duty not wilfully to commit the many sins of conformity; not sacrilegiously to abandon the preaching of the Gospel, or the public worship of God, though men forbid it, and call it schism." He shows successfully that Stillingfleet, in his controversy with the Roman Catholics, had maintained the same principles which he now impugned in the Nonconformists, and that he does great injustice to the latter in many of his historical statements. One passage, in reference to himself, deserves to be extracted:

"I perceive Dr. Stillingfleet marvelleth, that my own expectations of approaching death do not hinder me from writing what I do for the Nonconformists; whereas, the truth is, had not pain and weakness kept me from my youth as in the continual prospect of the grave and the next life, I had never been like to have been so much against conformity, and the present discipline of this church (that is, its want of discipline,) as I have been. For the world might have more flattered me, and biassed my judgment, and my conscience might have been bolder and less fearful of sin. And though I love not to displease, I must say this great truth, that I had never been like to have lived in so convincing, sensible experience of the great difference of the main body of the Conformists, from most of the Nonconformists, as to the seriousness of their Christian faith, and hope, and practice, their victory over the flesh and the world; I mean both of the clergy and laity of mine acquaintance. O! how great a difference have I found from my youth to this day. Though I doubt not but very many of the

passive conformable ministers (to say nothing of the imposers) have been and are worthy pious men, and such as would not persuade their hearers that the Jesuits first brought in spiritual prayer. And I had the great blessing of my education near four such, in three or four neighbor parishes."

The candor of this confession greatly prepossesses us in favor of the writer, and is almost a pledge of the correctness of his other statements. Stillingfleet had made many personal reflections on Baxter in his book, from which he vindicates himself very successfully. He had referred to the case of Kidderminster, which leads Baxter to give an interesting account of his conduct while there towards the episcopal Conformists, who were not then legally tolerated; he not only did not interfere with them, or solicit the interference of the magistrates, but gave them all the countenance in his power. The attempts which have frequently been made to show that the Episcopalians were persecuted during the Commonwealth, have uniformly failed. It was not the *religious*, but the *political* Episcopalians who were the objects of Cromwell's jealousy; and their opposition to his government was the sole cause of any interference which they ever experienced.

Stillingfleet himself did not answer Baxter's second Defence, but it was taken up by some others who were exceedingly zealous in his cause, and in that of the church; though not very judicious in the measures which they adopted. Dr. Sherlock published anonymously, first a thick 8vo volume, entitled, 'A Discourse about Church Unity; being a Defence of Dr. Stillingfleet's Unreasonableness of Separation, in answer to several late Pamphlets, but principally to Dr. Owen and Mr. Baxter.' 1681. And in the following year, in another volume, 'A Continuation and Vindication of the Defence of Dr. Stillingfleet, in answer to Mr. Baxter, Mr. Lob, and others.' He boldly affirms that "Whoever separates himself from the church of England cuts himself off from the Catholic church, and puts himself out of a state of salvation. Separation from the church of England is a schism, and a schism is as damning a sin as idolatry, drunkenness, or adultery."[p] This is being very plain, but it is a pitiful *brutum fulmen*.

Mr. Long also appeared as the second of Dr. Stillingfleet, in 'The Unreasonableness of Separation, the Second Part; or, a further Impartial Account of the History, Nature, and Pleas, of the present Separation from the church of England: with Special Remarks on the Life and Actions of Richard Baxter.' 1682. 8vo. This is, perhaps, the vilest and most malicious of all the attacks made upon Baxter. In reference to it, he says,

(p) Continuation, p. 389.

"Long, of Exeter, wrote so fierce a book to prove me, out of my own writings, one of the worst men living on earth, that I never saw anything like it. And being overwhelmed with work, and weakness, and pains; and having least zeal to defend a person so bad as I know myself to be, I never answered him, it being none of the matters in controversy, whether I be good or bad. God be merciful to me a sinner!"[q]

A third writer who appeared with his name in this controversy, was Richard Hooke, D. D., vicar of Halifax. He published the 'Nonconformist Champion; his Challenge Accepted; or, an answer to Mr. Baxter's Petition for Peace: with remarks on his Holy Commonwealth, his Sermon to the House of Commons, his Nonconformists' Plea, and his Answer to Dr. Stillingfleet.' 1682. 8vo. There is a vast deal of vaunting and vaporing in this little book; but it is one thing to accept of a challenge, and another to come off with the victory. Baxter did not take up Dr. Hooke's glove, which probably mortified him in no small degree. The most curious of the publications that appeared about this time against Baxter, and certainly the wittiest of all L'Estrange's productions, was 'The Casuist Uncased, in a dialogue betwixt Richard and Baxter, with a Moderator between them for quietness' sake.' 4to. It is a witty pamphlet, but wickedly intended: yet the writings of Baxter furnished ample means for such a production, and it cannot be denied that Sir Roger makes a very dexterous use of them. The dialogue is often very humorous; so that it is impossible not to smile at the joke, while we regret the object for which it is furnished. Baxter took it all very coolly. "I have never had the schooling of L'Estrange," he says, "and so never taught him to understand my writings, and therefore undertake not, that things congruous shall not seem contradictions to him."[r]

In connexion with this same controversy, Baxter published 'A Search for the English Schismatic; by the case and character, 1. Of the Diocesan Canoneers; 2. Of the present Mere Nonconformists. Not as an *accusation* of the *former*, but a necessary *defence* of the *latter*, so far as they are wrongfully accused and persecuted by them.' 4to. 1681. Of the origin and design of this performance, he gives the following account: "Because the accusation of schism is it that maketh all the noise against the Nonconformists, in the mouths of their persecutors, I wrote a few sheets, called, 'A Search for the English Schismatic,' comparing the principles and practices of both parties, and leaving it to the reader to judge who is the schismatic; showing that the Prelatists have, in their canons, *ipso*

(q) Life, part iii. p. 138. (r) Third Defence, part ii. p. 151.

facto excommunicated all the nobility, gentry, clergy, and people, who do but affirm, that there is anything sinful in their liturgy, ceremonies, or church-government, even the lowest officer. Their laws cast us out of the ministry into gaols, and then they call us schismatics, for not coming to their churches; yea, though we come to them constantly, as I have done, if we will not give over preaching ourselves, when the parishes I lived in had, one fifty thousand, the other twenty thousand souls in it, more than could come within the church-doors. This book also, and my 'Prognostication,' and, what I valued most, my 'True and Only Way of Universal Concord,' were railed at, but never answered that I know of." [s]

Having finished our account of the Stillingfleet controversy, we must now advert to some other publications of Baxter on Nonconformity about this time. The most important is his 'Treatise of Episcopacy; confuting by Scripture, reason, and the church's testimony, that sort of diocesan churches, prelacy, and government, which casteth out the primitive church species, episcopacy, ministry, and discipline; and confoundeth the Christian world by corruption, usurpation, schism, and persecution.' 1681. 4to. His own account of this volume presents a very accurate view of its nature and object. "Upon Mr. Henry Dodwell's provocation, I published a treatise of episcopacy' that had lain long by me; which fully openeth our judgment upon the difference between the old episcopacy and our new diocesans, and answereth almost all the chief writers which have written for such prelacy, especially Bishop Downame, Dr. Hammond, Saravia, Spalatensis, &c. I think I may freely say it is elaborate; and had it not done somewhat effectually in the undertaken cause, some one or other would have answered it ere now. It makes me admire that my 'Catholic Theology,' our 'Reformed Liturgy,' my 'Second Plea for Peace,' (that I say not the first also,) and this 'Treatise of Episcopacy,' could never procure an answer from any of these fierce accusing men; whereas the subjects of these four books are the controversies of the age, and which are by these men so much insisted on. But I have since found some explication about the English diocesans necessary; which the Separatists forced me to publish by misunderstanding me." [t]

This is one of the most elaborate and valuable of Baxter's works on the Nonconformist controversy, and shows how very fully he entered into the whole subject. It is divided into two parts, in which, in a succession of chapters, he treats at great length of the primitive episcopacy, ministry, and discipline, of the early churches; the origin and progress of dio-

(s) Life, part iii. pp. 188, 189.

(t) Ibid. p. 188.

cesan churches and episcopacy, and the corruption that crept into them, with the various consequences which have arisen from these changes. There is a large portion of sound learning and accurate reasoning in the work, so that it is not surprising Baxter felt disappointed at no attempt being made to answer it. He successfully shows that "the episcopal churches of the Holy Ghost's institution, in the New Testament, were but single congregations, consisting of volunteers:" and that the bishops recognised by the apostles, were persons who had merely the spiritual oversight of such congregations. Hence he contends, that nothing but a return to this state of things, will ever effectually cure the evils of the church. Whether this work is considered as a piece of ecclesiastical history, or in connexion with the controversy respecting church government, it deserves to be consulted, and will contribute more to saisfy the mind than all the other books of Baxter together.

His next publication was, 'An Apology for the Nonconformists' Ministry; containing the Reasons of their Preaching,' &c. 4to. 1681. The greater part of this book was written in 1668 and 1669, and at last published as an addition to the Defence of the Nonconformists, against Dr. Stillingfleet. He dedicates it to Compton, bishop of London, Barlow, bishop of Lincoln, Crofts, bishop of Hereford, Rainbow, bishop of Carlisle, Thomas, bishop of St. David's and Lloyd, bishop of Peterborough, of whom he speaks as good men, and lovers of moderation. In the work itself, he meets the statements and misrepresentations of Bishop Morley, Dr. Saywell, Mr. Durel, a nameless Ecclesiastical Politician and Debate Maker, the Counterminer, Fowlis, Good, and many others. There are some very touching and eloquent passages in this work. The concluding address to the bishops is very powerful. He tells them plainly, that the blame of most of the sufferings which were endured by himself and his brethren, properly belonged to them. They either caused or occasioned the severe enactments which were made against the Nonconformists, or by their influence might have prevented them. He beseeches them to consider the awful responsibility of preventing the preaching of the Gospel by so many faithful men, whose places were so inadequately supplied, and warns them of the guilt which they thus contracted.

"I am not so foolish," he says, "as not to know that all this talk is grievous to you, and not the way to my ease, or honor with you, nor to procure favor in your eyes. But if in such a day, and in such a case, we should all be silent, and none so much as call you to repentance, nor plead the cause of an injured Saviour and deserted souls, we should partake of the crimes which we are lamenting; and not only Gildas and Salvianus, and such-like, but all the prophets aud apostles would condemn us.

"And if all that is here said have no other effect than to increase your indignation and our sufferings; judge, O posterity! judge all disinterested impartial men, between these reverend lords and us; whether the petitions here presented to them, be selfish, or unreasonable, or such as should be rejected at so dear a rate as our lamentable divisions and church distractions come to! Yea, Christ, whose cause and interest we plead, will certainly and shortly judge; before whom their worldly grandeur and dignities will be insignificant; wrathful reproaches will not prove the innocent criminal, nor justify them that condemn the just, or that will not understand the will and interest of their Lord. Even so, come Lord Jesus, come quickly! Amen." [u]

The last publication in this department which remains to be noticed, is 'The English Nonconformity, as under King Charles II. and King James II.; truly stated and argued.' 4to. This is a considerable volume, containing sixty-two chapters, in which the whole Nonconformist controversy is argued in a series of dialogues between a minister and a lawyer. As it was published not long before the death of Baxter, it may fairly be considered as containing his last sentiments on those points which had for so many years occupied a great portion of his attention. It was all written a considerable time before the Revolution, though published shortly after it, and while the final settlement of the government was still future. No one of the numerous works of Baxter furnishes so full, clear, and satisfactory a view of nonconformity as this volume. It contains less of personal reference and debate, and is more restricted to principles, than any of the others; so that those who wish to ascertain with the least trouble the sentiments of Baxter, will consult this work to advantage. [x]

Having brought our account of Baxter's works on Nonconformity to a termination, it may be proper to offer a few concluding observations. To many it will appear strange and improper that he should have employed so much time on this subject. They will be ready to ask with surprise and indignation, To what purpose was this waste? Such persons overlook the state of the times, and the peculiar situation of Baxter. The spirit of oppression and persecution then raged in the most violent manner. Many of the persecutors were men respectable in point of moral character, and a large portion professed a great regard for the interests of religion. Baxter suffered considerably himself, but he felt more for the sufferings of his brethren,

(u) Life, part iii. pp. 235, 236. It was about this time, though I do not know that it was in answer to this book, that a pamphlet, with the following title, appeared, 'Kidderminster-Stuff; or, a Remnant of Mr. Baxter's Fraudes unravelled.' 4to. 1681. I have not seen it.

(x) A kind of answer was published to this work in a pamphlet, entitled, 'Reflections on Mr. Baxter's Last Book, called English Nonconformity,' &c. 4to. 1689.

than on his own account. Many of them had been driven from situations of important usefulness, separated from their families, condemned to exile and imprisonment, and suffered the loss of all things. It would have been unchristian and unmanly to remain silent while these things went on, if, by expostulation, apology, or vindication, any impression could be made.

Baxter might be considered as at the head of a large portion at least of his suffering brethren; all of whom respected his character, and admired his intrepidity. He was more independent in his circumstances than most of them. He was well known at court, and had considerable influence with some of the nobility. His disinterestedness was beyond suspicion, and he was utterly regardless of all personal consequences to himself. On every emergency he was looked up to for advice; and in time of danger, his wisdom and prowess were trusted to lead on the attack, or to cover a retreat.

If he erred in appearing too often, and sometimes on occasions which scarcely required him to expose himself or his cause, it was an error of judgment only. It was the excess of zeal for the good of others, not the gratification of any selfish or sordid passion. He was often singled out as an object of attack by petty scribblers, whose motive was to excite attention to themselves, rather than a desire to do good, or the hope that they would make an impression on the champion of Nonconformity. The silent disregard of such a man was more provoking than his severest animadversion. To the notice which he took of many of them, their names are now indebted for existence; they are known, not as the writers of any thing which any body reads, but as the adversaries of Richard Baxter.

In the state of the country from the time of the Restoration till the Revolution, it was of great importance that the Nonconformist controversy should be kept alive. It tended to support the spirits of the sufferers, to preserve the flame of liberty from being altogether smothered, to keep in check those arbitrary and oppressive measures which would have proved as ruinous to the constitution of the country, as to the liberties of the Nonconformists. Nothing but a great deal of writing, and writing with force and severity, could have answered the purpose. It was necessary to speak of persecution and oppression by their proper names, and to expose them in their own colors. As there was no moderation in the measures by which the consciences of men were invaded, and their dearest rights infringed, it would be absurd to expect nothing but calmness and moderation in the writings of those who suffered and resisted; yet in general the Nonconformists wrote like Christians; and in meekness acquitted themselves.

CHAPTER VIII.

WORKS ON POPERY.

Introductory Observations—'The Safe Religion'—'Winding-Sheet for Popery'—Grotian Religion'—Controversy with Peirce, Womack, Heylin, and Bramhall—'Key for Catholics'—'Successive Visibility of the Church'—Controversy with Johnson—'Fair Warning'—'Difference between the Power of Church Pastors and the Roman Kingdom'—'Certainty of Christianity without Popery'—'Full and Easy Satisfaction, which is the True Religion'—Dedicated to Lauderdale—'Christ, not the Pope, the Head of the Church'—'Roman Tradition Examined'—'Naked Popery'—Controversy with Hutchinson—'Which is the True Church'—'Answer to Dodwell'—'Dissent from Sherlock'—'Answer to Dodwell's Letter calling for more Answers'—'Against Revolt to a Foreign Jurisdiction'—'Protestant Religion truly stated'—Conclusion.

The doctrines and the friends of Popery had too much influence in England during the life of Baxter, not to engage his attention on a subject which had employed the pens of the ablest men from the period of the reformation. In point of argument, every thing necessary to expose the absurd and wicked pretensions of the see of Rome, had been said long before the time of Baxter. But the interests involved in the Popish controversy were too great, and the parties engaged in supporting them too subtle, to allow the subject to sleep, or even to slumber. The well-known leanings of the Stuart family to a system more favorable than any other to their besetting sin,—the love of arbitrary power; their family alliances with its sworn defenders, their patronage of those who were considered favorable to the principles or the spirit of Popery, with many other circumstances,—kept alive the hopes of the Roman Catholics that England, one of the fairest gems in the tiara, would yet be brought back to its allegiance, and be numbered among the jewels of the Papal See.

Even the civil wars and their results did not altogether extinguish these hopes. The emissaries of Rome were active throughout their entire duration, and were considered as sometimes having a hand in the events which took place. Though Baxter certainly was credulous, we can scarcely conceive that he had no authority for asserting what he often did—that Romish priests assumed the guise of sectaries, appeared zealous in sowing dissensions, and propagating wild and extravagant opinions. His notions of the extent to which this prevailed, were probably exaggerated; but it was quite to the purpose of the Catholics to act in this manner: as the more furious the fanaticism of Protestants, the

more would the necessity for an infallible head appear, and the sooner would the country be likely to become tired of its apostacy. [a] However this may have been, Baxter felt it to be his duty, both as a Christian and a Protestant, to oppose strenuously a system which he regarded as most ungodly in its pretensions, and most injurious in its influence to the interests of liberty, of sound morality, and of religion. To take this ground, and to appear in the front rank of the advocates of Protestantism, and of the adversaries of the Romish faith, were with Baxter one act.

He accordingly published, in 1657, 'The Safe Religion, or Three Disputations for the Reformed Catholic Religion against Popery;' in which he endeavors to prove that Popery is against the Holy Scriptures, against the unity of the catholic church, the consent of the ancient doctors, the plainest reason, and the common judgment of sense itself. The object of the first dissertation is, to prove that the religion of Protestants is safe'; of the second, that Popery is unsafe; and of the third, that the manner in which Popery is sustained in argument by a claim to infallibility, is subversive of the faith. It is dedicated to the "Literate Romanists," and is on the whole an able exposure and refutation of the system of Popery, to which I am not aware that any answer was ever made.

As that was a considerable volume, and better adapted to the learned than to the unlearned, he published in the same year, 'A Winding-sheet for Popery,' comprising, within a few pages, the most appropriate arguments against the whole system. This was well fitted for popular reading and general circulation; which also remained unanswered.

His next work, though small, and but little of it on the subject of Popery, forms part of a very angry controversy, in which he became involved, with several persons of considerable note. In his work on 'Universal Concord,' published in the early part of

(a) The opinion that Catholic Priests were employed as disguised Puritans, or sowers of division, is not peculiar to Baxter. Sir W. Boswell, in a letter to Archbishop Laud, dated from the Hague, in the year 1640, informs him that above sixty Romish Clergymen had gone, within two years, from France, to preach the Scotch covenant and the rules of that kirk, and to spread the same about the northern coasts of England; and that their great object was to effect the ruin of English Episcopacy.—*Usher's Life*, Appendix p. 27. Bramhall, bishop of Derry, in 1654, assures Archbishop Usher that, in the year 1646, by order from Rome, above a hundred of the Romish clergy were sent into England, consisting of English, Scotch, and Irish, who had been educated in France, Italy, Germany, and Spain. These, he says, were mostly soldiers in the army of the Parliament. Even in 1654, he affirms that there were many priests at Paris preparing to be sent over, who held meetings twice a week, in which they opposed one another, some pretending to be for Presbytery, others for Independency, and others for Anabaptism. That their qualifications for the work in which they were to engage, were judged of by the learned superiors of some of the convents; that the parties were entered in the registers of their respective orders, but with different names, which they were to use and change as circumstances might require; and that they kept up a regular correspondence with their fraternities abroad.—*Usher*, p. 611.

1658, he had thought it his duty to warn some who appeared to be prosecuting the design of Grotius and Cassander, to reconcile the Protestant churches to the see of Rome, on certain abatements being made by that see to the principles or prejudices of Protestants. The insinuation that Grotius was a concealed Papist, and that others were engaged in a similar plan, excited very strong emotions in the breast of Dr. Sanderson and Dr. Thomas Peirce. The latter, in a work entitled 'The Self-revenger exemplified,' directed against Mr. Barlee, demanded from Baxter a plainer acconnt of Grotius, and his followers. This Baxter was not unwilling to give him. But we must hear his own account of this controversy.

"Peirce's principal business," he says, "was to defend Grotius. In answer to which I wrote a little treatise, called 'The Grotian Religion discovered,' in which I cited his own words, especially out of his 'Discussio Apologetici Rivetiani,' where he openeth his terms of reconciliation with Rome, viz., that it be acknowledged the mistress church, and the Pope have his supreme government; not arbitrary, but only according to the canons. To which end he defendeth the Council of Trent itself, Pope Pius's oath, and all the councils; which is no other than the French sort of Popery. I had not then heard of the book written in France called 'Grotius Papizans,' nor of 'Sarravius's Epistles,' in which he witnesseth it from his own mouth. But the very words which I cited, contain an open profession of Popery.

"In a preface before this book, I vindicated the Synod of Dort from the abusive, virulent accusations of one that called himself Tilenus, junior. Thereupon, Peirce wrote a much more railing, malicious volume than the former; the liveliest impress of Satan's image, malignity, bloody malice, and falsehood, covered in handsome, railing rhetoric, that ever I have seen from any that called himself a Protestant. The preface was answered just in the same manner, by one who styled himself Philo-Tilenus. Three such men as this Tilenus, junior, Peirce, and Gunning, I have not heard of besides in England: of the Jesuits' opinion in doctrinals, and of the old Dominican complexity, yet the ablest men that their party hath in all the land; of great diligence in study and reading; of excellent oratory, especially Tilenus, junior, and Peirce; and of temperate lives. But all their parts are so sharpened with a furious, persecuting zeal against those that dislike Arminianism, high prelacy, or full conformity, that they are alike the briers and thorns, which are not to be touched, but by a fenced hand. They breathe out threatenings against God's servants, better than themselves, and seem unsatisfied with blood and ruin, but still cry, 'Give,

give; bidding as loud defiance to Christian charity, as ever Arius, or any heretic, did to faith.

"This book of mine, of the Grotian religion, greatly offended many others, but none of them could speak any sense against it; the citations, for matter of fact, being unanswerable. And it was only the matter of fact which I undertook to prove, viz., that Grotius professed himself a moderate Papist; but for his fault in so doing, I little meddled with it." [b]

Such is Baxter's own account of this controversy, which related as much in its progress to Arminianism, as to Grotius and Popery. The religion of Grotius must have been of a very equivocal kind, for as many sects seem to have contended for him, as cities about the birth of Homer. The fact is, he mixed too much in the political world not to be seriously injured by it. He speculated about union, and falsely imagined that it might be practicable to effect some agreement between the Catholics and Protestants, on principles in which neither party would agree. He was not a Papist in the technical sense of the term, but he endeavored to give an orthodox interpretation to some of the doctrines of Popery, and objected to some of the charges preferred by Protestants against the church of Rome; which, with his disposition to compromise, led the Protestants to look at him with great jealousy. [c]

Baxter's opinion of Grotius, notwithstanding these views of his sentiments, which were probably more influenced by political than religious considerations, stood very high. He was in every respect a distinguished man—his learning, his talents, his love of liberty, his amiable dispositions, must make his memory dear to all who are capable of estimating his virtue and acquirements.

Tilenus, junior, was a fictitious name, assumed by Bishop Womack, in his attacks upon Calvinism and the Puritans. [d] 'The Examination of Tilenus before the Triers, in order to his

(b) Life, part i. p. 113.

(c) Lord Lauderdale says, in one of his letters to Baxter, "I have read your reply to Peirce, in which you fully satisfy me that Grotius was a Papist. I was acquainted with Grotius at Paris. He was then ambassador for Sweden, in the year 1637; and though I was then very young, some visits passed between us. My discourse with him was only on humanity; but I remember well he was then esteemed such a Papist as you call a Cassandrian, and so .... did esteem him, who was a priest—the owner of that great library now printed in his name. With him I was also acquainted. He was a great admirer of Grotius, and esteemed among his principal friends."—*Baxter MSS.*

(d) Daniel Tilenus was professor of divinity at Sedan, and, in the early part of his life, a Calvinist. He afterwards adopted the sentiments of the Remonstrants, and took part, both in their opposition to Calvinism, and in their sufferings on account of it. Among other things, he wrote 'Canones Synodi Dordracenæ, cum notis et animadversionibus,' &c. A tract of his appeared in English, under the title of 'The Doctrine of the Synods of Dort and Alez brought to the Proof of Practice,' &c. 1629. On this foundation Womack appears to have adopted his designation of 'Tilenus, junior, and to have constructed his pamphlet, 'The Examination of Tilenus.' Womack was a very decided Arminian, and thoroughly acquainted with the writers of the Dutch school. He died bishop of St. David's, in 1685.

intended settlement in the office of a public Preacher in the Commonwealth of Utopia,' is a keen sarcastic pamphlet which appeared in 1658,[e] intended to expose the conduct of the Triers, and the sentiments which they held. It describes a trial of this said Tilenus, before a jury consisting of Messrs. Absolute, Fatality, Preterition, Fryable, Damman, Narrow-Grace, *alias* Stint-Grace, Efficax, Indefectible, Confidence, Dubious, Meanwell, Simulans, Take-o-trust, Know-little, and Impertinent. The leading characters of the day are said to have been introduced under these fictitious names; Narrow-Grace being supposed to be designed for Philip Nye, and Dr. Dubious for Richard Baxter. There is a good deal of severe humor, as might be expected, in the book, besides a vast portion of misrepresentation and caricature.

'The Grotian Religion' brought forward Womack a second time in his 'Arcana Dogmatum Anti-remonstrantium; or, the Calvinist's Cabinet unlocked, in an apology for Tilenus, against a pretended vindication of the Synod of Dort, at the provocation of Mr. Richard Baxter, held forth in the Preface to his Grotian Religion.' 1659. 8vo. This is a grand attack on the doctrines of the synod of Dort, and on Baxter, as holding substantially those doctrines, from which it is very evident that the author never supposed Baxter would be suspected of Arminianism. Tilenus is one of the stoutest and acutest adversaries with whom Baxter had to contend. He was well acquainted with the whole range of the Arminian controversy, and had examined every syllable of Baxter's writings; from which he did not fail to extract passages, the explaining or reconciling of which must have tried even the metaphysical acuteness of Baxter. It does not appear from any thing which Baxter wrote, that he knew Bishop Womack to be the author of these performances.

Peirce's reply, of which Baxter speaks so severely, was 'The New Discoverer discovered; by way of Answer to Baxter's pretended Discovery of the Grotian Religion, with the several subjects contained therein.' 1658. 4to. The quarrel between them was kept up to a very distant period; and the personal feelings of Peirce were discovered in a manner not the most creditable to himself. Indeed, the high-church Arminian clergy generally appear to have been greatly annoyed by this trifling tract of Baxter's. An expression in the preface where he refers to Peter Heylin's mode of describing the Puritans, led to a lengthened correspondence with that bigoted and intemperate polemic. This correspondence Heylin published with a very characteristic title: 'The Letter Combat managed by Peter Heylin, D. D., with Mr. Baxter of Kidderminster, Dr. Bernard

(e) This pamphlet is republished by Mr. Nichols in his 'Calvinism and Arminianism Compared.'

of Gray's Inn, Mr. Hickman of Mag. Col. Ox. &c.' 1659. 8vo. That the party to which Baxter was opposed, were justly regarded by him as leaning to Popery, is evident from a single sentence in Heylin's last letter: "So far, I assure you, I am of the religion of Hugh Grotius, that I wish as heartily as he did, that the breaches in the walls of Jerusalem were well closed up; that the Puritans, submitting to the church of England, and the church of England being reconciled with the church of Rome, we might unite and centre in those sacred truths, those undeniable principles and established doctrines, which have been universally received in the church of Christ, and in which all parties do agree." This is only one among many proofs of the strong feeling which prevailed among the high-church clergy towards the church of Rome. [f]

Many years afterwards, a posthumous work was published, entitled, 'Bishop Bramhall's Vindication of himself and the Episcopal Clergy from the Presbyterian charge of Popery, as it is managed by Mr. Baxter in his 'Treatise of the Grotian Religion.' 1672. 12mo. Bramhall and his coadjutors had so much of the Popery of Protestantism about them, as to be justly liable to the charge which Baxter and others preferred against them. Of this book, Baxter says:

"He passeth over the express words of Grotius, which I had cited, which undoubtedly prove what I said: yea, though I had since largely Englished them, and recited them in the second part of my 'Key for Catholics,' with a full confirmation of my proofs. And he feigneth me to make him a Grotian, and confederate in his design; whereas I not only had no such word, but had expressly excepted him by name, as imputing no such thing to him. Before the book was a long preface of Mr. Parker's, most vehement against Dr. Owen, and somewhat against myself. To which Andrew Marvel, a parliament man, burgess for Hull, did publish an answer so exceeding jocular, as thereby procured abundance of readers, and pardon to the author. Because I perceived that the design of Bishop Bramhall's book was for the uniting of Christendom under the old patriarchs of the Roman imperial church, and so under the Pope, as the Western Patriarch, and *Principium Unitatis*, I had thought the design, and this publication, looked dangerously, and therefore began to write an answer to it. But Mr. Simmons, my bookseller, came to me, and told me, that Roger L'Estrange, the overseer of the printers, had sent for him, and told

(f) 'A Review of the Certamen Epistolare betwixt Dr. Heylin and Mr. Hickman' was published in a small volume in 1659, under the fictitious name of Theophilus Churchman. It is called by the writer himself a *Joco-seria* review of the counter-scuffle; the object of which is chiefly to vindicate the English reformers from being Arminians, which Heylin had wished to make them. It is cleverly written, and gives some hard blows to Dr. Heylin.

him, that he heard I was answering Bishop Bramhall, and swore to him most vehemently, that if I did it, he would ruin him and me, and perhaps my life should be brought in question. I perceived the bookseller durst not print it; and so I was fain to cast it by, which I the easier did, because the main scope of all the book was fully answered long before, in the foresaid second part of my 'Key for Catholics.'"[g]

We must now return from this Grotian digression to the controversy. Baxter's next work in this department, is the 'Key for Catholics.' 1659. 4to. The object of this work was to expose the juggling of the Jesuits; to satisfy those who were willing to understand, whether the cause of the Roman or the Reformed churches is of God: and to leave the reader utterly inexcusable who should afterwards continue a Papist. The first part of it contains an exposure of forty frauds or deceptions practised by the Popish party; the second part is an attempt to show that the *Catholic* church is not a political body, headed by an earthly sovereign; and that such a unity as this would imply, is not to be desired. Here he again encounters Grotius and Peirce, on both of whom he makes some sharp remarks. The following is his account of this work and its reception:

"In this treatise, proving that the blood of the king is not by Papists to be charged upon Protestants, I plainly hazarded my life against the powers that then were, and grievously incensed Sir H. Vane. Yet Mr. J. N. was so tender of the Papists' intetest, that having before been offended with me for a petition against Popery, he spake against it on the bench: and his displeasure being increased by this book, he took occasion, after the king came in, to write against me for those very passages which condemned the king-killers. Because, comparing the case with the doctrine and practice of the Papists, I showed that the Sectarians and Cromwellians had of the two a more plausible pretence, he confuted these pretences of theirs, as if they had been my own; thereby making the world believe that I wrote for the king's death, in the very pages where, to the hazard of my life, I wrote against it; while he himself took the engagement against the king and the House of Lords, was a justice under Oliver, and more than this, signed orders for the sequestering of others of the king's party. But the great indignation against this book and the former, is, that they were, by epistles, directed to Richard Cromwell, as lord protector, which I did only to provoke him that had power, to use it well, when the Parliament had sworn fidelity to him; and that without any word of approbation of his title."[h]

(g) Life, part iii. p. 102.

(h) Life, part i. p. 118. Baxter omitted the dedication to Richard Cromwell, in his second edition of the 'Key,' and substituted in its place one to the Duke

The next work by Baxter on this controversy, the 'Successive Visibility of the Church,' 1660, 12mo, came out under very peculiar circumstances; for an account of which I again avail myself of his own statement: "When I was at Kidderminster, in 1659, one Mr. Langhorn, a furrier in Walbrook, sent me a sheet of paper, subscribed by William Johnson, containing an argument against our church, for want of perpetual visibility; or, that none but the church of Rome, and those in communion with it, had been successively visible; casting all on his opponent, to prove our church's constant visibility. He that sent this paper desired me to answer it, as for some friends of his who were unsatisfied. I sent him an answer the next day after I received it. To this, some weeks after, I received a reply. This reply cited many fathers and councils, and, as the custom is, brought the controversy into the wood of church history. To this I drew up a large rejoinder, and sent it by the carrier. Though I was not rich enough to keep an amanuensis, and had not leisure myself to transcribe it; yet, as it well happened, I had got a friend to write me a copy of my rejoinder: for it fell out that the carrier lost the copy which I gave him to carry to London, and professed that he never knew what became of it. And no wonder, when I after learned that my antagonist lived within five or six miles of me, whom I supposed to have lived one hundred and fifty miles off. When I expected an answer, I received, a month after, an insulting challenge of a speedy answer, and this seconded with another; all calling for haste. I suppose he thought I had kept no copy; but as soon as I could get it transcribed I sent it him: and I heard no more of Mr. Johnson for a twelvemonth. When I was in London, I went to Mr. Langhorn, and desired him to procure me an answer to my papers from Mr. Johnson, or that I might know that I should have none. At last, he told me that Mr. Johnson would come and speak with me himself, which he did, and would have put off all the business with a few words, but would promise me no answer. At last, by Mr. Tillotson,[i] I was informed that his true name was Terret; that he lived in the house of a certain nobleman, near our parts; that, being much in London, he was there the chief hector, or great disputer, for the Papists; and that he was the chief of the two men who had held and printed the dispute with Dr. Pearson and Dr. Gunning. When I saw what advantage he had got by printing that dispute, I resolved that he should not do so by

of Lauderdale; not perhaps the happiest choice which he might have made of a patron. He declares, in the dedication to Lauderdale, that he never saw the face of Richard, nor ever had a word from him; and that his sole motive in addressing him was to stir him up to do good.

(i) Afterwards Archbishop Tillotson.

me, and so I printed all our papers. But before I printed them, I urged him to some further conference ; and at our next meeting I told him how necessary it was that we should agree first on the meaning of our terms. So I wrote down some few, as church, pope, council, bishop, heresy, schism, which I desired him to explain to me under his hand, promising him the like whenever he desired it; which, when I had got from him, I gave him some animadversions on it, showing their implications ; to which he answered, and to that I replied. When he came no more to me, nor gave me any answer, I printed all together ; which made him think it necessary, at last, to write a confutation ; whereto I have since published a full rejoinder, to which I can procure no answer." [k]

The volume accordingly contains the first papers which passed between Johnson and Baxter ; an appendix, in which he gives an account to Johnson, how far heretics are, or are not, in the church ; Johnson's explanation of the most usual terms in the controversy, with Baxter's animadversions ; a paper on successive ordination ; and some letters which passed between Baxter and Thomas Smith, a Papist, with a narrative of the success.

This Johnson appears to have perverted from the truth Lady Anne Lindsey, daughter of the countess of Balcarras, who employed Baxter to endeavor to reclaim her. He tried it accordingly, but without effect. She made her escape from her mother, and went to France, where she died in a nunnery, a few years afterwards. [l]

In 1663, a pamphlet appeared with Baxter's name, called 'Fair Warning : or Twenty-five Reasons against Toleration and Indulgence of Popery.' For my knowledge of this tract I am indebted to the invaluable work of Hallam on the British Constitution, never having seen any copy of it myself. He says, it is a pleasant specimen of the *argumentum ab inferno*. "Seeing there is but one safe way to salvation, do you think that the Protestant way is that way, or is it not? If it be not, why do you live in it? If it be, how can you find in your heart to give your subjects liberty to go another way? Can you, in your conscience, give them leave to go on in that course, in which in your conscience you think you could not be saved?" Hallam adds, after making this quotation, "Baxter does not mention this little book in his Life ; nor does he there speak violently about the toleration of Romanists." [m]

His next work in this controversy is, 'The Difference between the Power of Magistrates and Church Pastors, and the Roman Kingdom and Magistracy, under the name of a Church and Church Government usurped by the Pope, or liberally given him

(k) Life, part ii. pp. 218, 219. (l) Ibid. pp. 219—228.
(m) Hallam's Constitutional Hist., vol. ii. p. 476.

by Popish Princes.' 1671. 4to. This pamphlet consists of two letters addressed to Lewis Molinæus, M. D., the author of several books on the Romish controversy: and which had drawn Baxter's attention to the subject. His account of this book is curious.

"Ludovicus Molineus was vehemently set upon the crying down of the papal and prelatical government, that he thought it was the work he was sent into the world for, to convince princes that all government was in themselves, and that no proper government, but only persuasion, belonged to the churches. To this end he wrote his 'Paræsenesis contra Ædificatiores Imperii in Imperio,' his 'Papa Ultrajectinus,' and other tractates; which he thrust on me, to make me of his mind. At last he wrote his 'Jugulum Causæ,' with no less than seventy epistles before it, directed to princes, and men of interest, among whom he was pleased to put one to me. The good man meant rightly in the main, but had not a head sufficiently accurate for such a controversy, and so could not perceive that any thing could be called properly *government*, that was no way *coactive* by corporal penalties. To turn him from the *Erastian* extreme, and end that controversy by a reconciliation, I published an hundred propositions conciliatory, and of the difference between the magistrate's power and the pastor's." [n]

He published, in 1672, 'The Certainty of Christianity without Popery; or, whether the Catholic-Protestant or the Papist have the surer faith.' 8vo. This pamphlet, he tells us, was designed to meet the repeated challenges of the Papists, and to direct the unskilful how to defend their faith against them and against infidels also. To both descriptions of persons, he informs us in his Life, the work proved useful. The connexion between Popery and infidelity, or the tendency of the former to produce the latter, is closer than many persons suppose. To believe too much, may prove as dangerous as to believe too little. Faith without evidence, is credulity; a state of mind not more congenial to the influence of genuine religion, than unbelief itself. A system which wages war with the established principles of moral evidence, by requiring man to prostrate his understanding to the dictation of uninspired authority, and to act in opposition to the conviction of his senses, prepares him for believing any thing, however monstrous, and for rejecting any thing, however evident and true. In this way, Popery lays the foundation of infidelity; and enables us to account for the extraordinary fact, that in the countries where it has been longest and most firmly established, the greatest numbers of unbelievers have been found. The abetters of the system have been fond of maintaining that the overthrow of Popery must be the ruin of Christianity; which

(n) Life, part iii. p. 85.

is all one with holding, that the subversion of a system of lying and imposition, must necessarily prove the ruin of truth and moral honesty.

'Full and Easy Satisfaction, which is the True and Safe Religion,' appeared in 1674, 8vo, along with the second edition of his 'Key for Catholics.' It is a dialogue between a doubter, a Papist, and a reformed Catholic Christian; and consists of four parts, in which he treats of the nature of the difference between the parties, justifies the Protestant, enumerates charges against the Roman Catholic, and insists particularly on the wickedness and absurdity of the doctrine of transubstantiation. It is dedicated to his grace the Duke of Lauderdale, his majesty's commissioner, and principal secretary for the kingdom of Scotland. Of this circumstance, and of the duke himself, he furnishes us with the following account.

"In the preface to the first impression, I had mentioned with praise the Earl of Lauderdale, as then prisoner by Cromwell in Windsor Castle, from whom I had many pious and learned letters, and who had so much read over all my books, that he remembered them better, as I thought, than I did myself. Had I now left out that mention of him, it would have seemed an injurious recantation of my kindness; and to mention him now a duke, as then a prisoner, was unmeet. The king used him as his special counsellor and favorite. The parliament had set themselves against him. He still professed great kindness to me, and I had reason to believe it was without dissembling. Because he was accounted by all to be rather a too rough adversary, than a flatterer of one so low as I; and because he spake the same for me behind my back, that he did to my face. I had then a new piece against transubstantiation to add to my book, and, being desirous it should be read, I thought best to join it with the other, and prefix before both an epistle to the duke; in which I said not a word of him but the truth: and I did it the rather, that his name might cause some great ones to read, at least that epistle, if not the short additional tractate, in which I thought I said enough to open the shame of Popery. But the indignation men had against the duke, made some blame me, as keeping up the reputation of one whom multitudes thought very ill of; whereas I named none of his faults, and did nothing I could well avoid, for the aforesaid reasons. Long after this, he professed his kindness to me, and told me I should never want while he was able, and humbly entreated me to accept twenty guineas from him, which I did." [o]

(o) Life, part iii. p. 130. Baxter, in his dedication, speaks of the duke's extensive acquaintance with his writings, and of the reliance which he placed on his judgment. He was not the only man of learning who treated Lauderdale in this manner. Spanheim dedicates to him and Usher the third part of his 'Dubia Evangelica,' and speaks, though Lauderdale was then very young, of his "judicium supra ætatem maturum, verum omnium cognitione subactum pectus."

The correspondence with Lauderdale, to which Baxter here refers, still exists, and is certainly very honorable to the character and talents of Lauderdale. His attachment, which he expresses in the warmest terms, to Baxter, appears to have been very sincere, as he not only translated passages from books for the use of Baxter, while he was a prisoner, and otherwise evinced his friendship for him, but when his fortunes afterwards changed, and he rose to eminence in the state, he continued to remember and befriend him. Yet it is impossible to think of the character of Lauderdale with respect. Like many other men, he shone in adversity, but was corrupted by prosperity.

In the 'Morning Exercises against Popery,' preached by the leading Nonconformist ministers about London, in the year 1675; Baxter delivered a discourse on 'Christ, not the Pope, the Universal Head of the Church.' These sermons were delivered in Southwark; and when it is mentioned that among the preachers were such men as Poole, Jenkyns, Vincent, Clarkson, Annesley, and Baxter, the ability with which the various subjects is discussed will at once be understood. The volume, containing the 'Discourses against Popery,' embraces the leading points in controversy between Catholics and Protestants, and abounds with learning and information. Considering the character of these discourses, and the state of the times when they were delivered, they afford strong proof of the decision and boldness by which the preachers were distinguished.

In the same year, 1675, he published 'Select Arguments against Popery,' which I have not seen, and cannot therefore judge whether they are original, or only a selection, in the form of a tract, of some of his reasonings in his other publications. I suspect they are the latter.

The appearance of a book, called, 'A Rational Discourse of Transubstantiation, in a Letter to a Person of Honor from a Master of Arts of the University of Cambridge,' led him to produce, in 1676, 'Roman Tradition examined, in the point of Transubstantiation.' 4to. The author of the work, to which this is an answer, was understood to be Mr. W. Hutchinson, of Lincolnshire, who wrote also 'Catholic Naked Truth, or the Puritan Convert to Apostolical Christianity;' in answer to which, Baxter wrote his 'Naked Popery; or, the Naked Falsehood of a book called the Catholic Naked Truth;' [p] which

(p) The title of Hutchinson's *alias* Berry's, book, which led to the corresponding title of Baxter's reply, appears to have been suggested by a work of Bishop Croft's, which was published shortly before that time, and occasioned a considerable sensation—'The Naked Truth; or, the True State of the Primitive Church.' 1675. 4to. It is a moderate book, intended to heal the divisions which then prevailed in the kingdom, and to reconcile the Church and the Nonconformists to each other. It was acceptable to the latter, but not to the high-church party. Dr. Turner attacked it in 'Animadversions on Naked Truth,' which led to a defence of it from the pen of Andrew Marvell, under the title of 'Mr.

appeared in the same volume with his Roman Tradition, in 1677. Hutchinson was the son of pious Protestant parents, but forsook the faith in which he had been nurtured. In one of the above works, he defends the reasonableness of transubstantiation, the most unreasonable of all impositions; and in the other, his object is to prove, that the Conformists were men of no conscience or religion; but that all sincere religion was with the Papist and Puritans: thus endeavoring to flatter the latter, as if the two parties were equally influenced by conscientious principles. Baxter effectually exposed both his productions; but though he did this, and afterwards became acquainted with the author, he never could get him to reply.

In 1679, he published a treatise, which may be regarded as the continuation of his controversy with Johnson, 'Which is the True Church, the whole Christian World as headed by Christ, or the Pope and his subjects?' 4to. This he considered a full answer to his antagonist, who wisely allowed the controversy to drop.

Among the high-church party, whom Baxter considered inclined to Popery, were Mr. Henry Dodwell and Dr. Sherlock. With the former he had entered into a very long personal correspondence; and from the latter, as has been stated in another place, he received very shameful treatment. Dodwell was a learned and amiable man, who held principles so nearly allied to Popery about the sacraments, ministry, and several other points of religion, as to require very nice discernment to perceive any important difference between him and moderate Roman Catholics. He held that there is no true ministry, church, sacraments, or covenant right to pardon and salvation, but through a ministry ordained by bishops, in regular and uninterrupted succession from the apostles. In his large book, entitled 'Separation of Churches from the Episcopal Government, as practised by the present Nonconformists, proved Schismatical,' 1679, 4to, he endeavors to establish these sentiments, and to fix the guilt of schism, and hence, on his principles, exclusion from salvation, upon the Nonconformist, and by implication on the reformed churches. He was greatly indignant

Smirke; or, the Divine in Mode.' 'Lex Talionis; or, the Author of Naked Truth stripped Naked,' was the production of Philip Fell, one of the fellows of Eton College. 'A modest Survey of the most considerable Things in Naked Truth,' was ascribed to Bishop Burnet. 'A Second Part of Naked Truth,' was published in 1681, in folio, by Edmund Hickeringhill, of Colchester, a sort of imitation of the first. A third and fourth parts were written by other pens. These led to 'The Catholic Naked Truth' of Hutchinson; to 'The Naked Popery' of Baxter; and to 'Naked Truth needs no Shift,' by William Penn, the Quaker. So much for the influence of a title in producing imitation on a subject to which all parties lay claim, and which it is so easy to accommodate to the purpose of all! A more modest title, however, might have been found by grave bishops, and less greedily imitated by solemn Quakers, and stern Presbyterians.

at Baxter's insinuations of his Popish leanings, in the third part of his book on 'Universal Concord,' where Baxter comments severely on his views of schism. "There is lately," he says, "come out of Ireland, a young ordained student of Trinity College, Dublin, to propagate this and such-like doctrines in London. To which end he hath lately written a large and wordy volume, as if it were only against the Nonconformists; which being new, and the most audacious and confident attempt that ever I knew made against the reformed churches by one that saith himself he is no Papist, and being the most elaborate enforcement of the Papists' grand argument, on which of late they build their cause, I think it needful not to pass it by."[q]

Dodwell's offence at being thus classed with Papists, induced Baxter, at last, to publish a correspondence which had formerly taken place between them, in 'An Answer to Mr. Dodwell, confuting an Universal Human Church Supremacy, Aristocratical and Monarchical, as Church Tyranny and Popery.' 1681, 4to. With this he conjoined, 'An Account of his Dissent from Dr. Sherlock, his Doctrine, Accusations, and Argumentation.' With this he also unites his dissent from the French, from Bishop Gunning, and his chaplain, Dr. Saywell, Mr. Thorndike, Bishop Bramhall, Bishop Sparrow, &c.

Dodwell replied to Baxter's Pretended Confutation of his former work; with Three Letters formerly written to him, by Mr. Baxter, in 1673, concerning the Possibility of Discipline under a Diocesan Government.' 1681. To which Baxter rejoined, in his 'Answer to Mr. Dodwell's Letter, calling for more Answers.' 1682. 4to. He calls Dodwell's system, "Leviathan; or, Absolute Destructive Prelacy, the son of Abaddon, Apollyon, and not of Jesus Christ."

To enter minutely into the subject of these volumes now, would answer no valuable purpose. It is partly personal, partly relating to the Nonconformist controversy, and partly to those popish views which were held by the class of persons referred to. There is no proper halting place between high-church principles and those of Rome. A system identifying man's authority with God's laying claim to apostolic authority, and

(q) 'Universal Concord,' part iii. p. 74. Archbishop Tillotson said of Dodwell and Baxter, "that they were much alike in their tempers and opinions in one respect, though they were widely opposed to each other in their tenets; both of them loved to abound in their own sense; could by no means be brought off their own apprehensions and thoughts, but would have them to be the rule and standard for all other men."—*Birch's Life of Tillotson*, p. 401. The Life of Dodwell, by Brokesby, gives some account of his controversy with Baxter, and affords a singular illustration of the extent to which a man may possess learning without judgment, and piety without discernment. He had the literature of a Scaliger in the head of a child. He protested, however, against being considered a friend to Popery.

connecting God's salvation with the ministry of man, modified in whatever way, is essentially popish and anti-Christian in its character and claims. The parties holding it may be more or less entitled to respect as men of learning or of piety, but resistance of their doctrines is binding on all who value the principles of our common Protestantism and our common Christianity. [r]

Of a similar nature to the works just mentioned, is another production of our indefatigable author, 'Against Revolt to a Foreign Jurisdiction, which would be to England its Perjury, Church ruin, and Slavery.' 1691. 8vo. This work, though much of it had been written long before, was not published, as appears from its date, till near the end of his life. He dedicates it to his 'reverend and desired friend,' Dr. John Tillotson, then dean of St. Paul's, whom he earnestly entreats to present it to the next convocation, to induce it, if possible, to make a public renunciation of a foreign jurisdiction, and to discountenance the books which were written in its favor. It is not probable that Tillotson complied with this request. Some of the historical information contained in the work, of the attempts which had been made, at various times, to bring England under the jurisdiction of Rome, is curious, and clearly shows that the fears and jealousies of Baxter and his friends, were not without cause. It may be considered as Baxter's final answer to Peirce, Heylin, Bramhall, Hammond, Sparrow, Parker, Dodwell, Thorndike, Sherlock, &c., and furnishes a key to many of the differences, both civil and religious, which had occurred in the kingdom. There is one chapter where he gives a summary view of the attempts to introduce, at least, a species of episcopal Popery and arbitrary government into this country, from the time of Elizabeth, of the successful resistance it experienced, and of the final result; which I should have been glad to quote, had my limits permitted. It begins at page 332.

'The Protestant Religion Truly Stated and Justified,' is a posthumous publication, which appeared shortly after his death, with a preface by Dr. Williams and Mr. Sylvester, though the work had been given to the printer by Baxter himself finished, before they saw it. This may be regarded as Baxter's legacy on the subject of Popery. It is a small 12mo volume; but contains, in fifty-two short sections, a summary of the whole controversy, in answer to a work which had appeared a short time before his death, entitled 'The Touchstone of the Re-

(r) Much of the correspondence between Dodwell and Baxter was friendly, and a great deal still remains unpublished. There is one letter from Dodwell to Baxter still preserved among the MSS. of the latter, in twenty closely-written folio pages, full of the learning for which Dodwell was distinguished.

formed Gospel.' At the conclusion there is a singular prayer, which I quote, as probably the last Baxter wrote for the press.

"From the serpent's seed, and his deceiving subtle lies; from Cain and his successors, and the malignant, blood-thirsty enemies of Abel's faithful acceptable worship; from such a worldly-and-fleshly sacred generation as take gain for godliness, make their worldly carnal interest the standard of their religion, and their proud domination to pass for the kingdom of Christ; from an usurping vice-Christ, whose ambition is so boundless, as to extend to the prophetical, priestly, and kingly headship, over all the earth, even to the antipodes, and to that which is proper to God himself, and our Redeemer; from a leprous sect, which condemneth the far greatest part of all Christ's church on earth, and separateth from them, calling itself the whole and only church; from that church which decreeth destruction, to all that renounce not all human sense, by believing that bread is not bread, nor that wine is not wine, but Christ's very flesh and blood, who now hath properly no flesh and blood, but a spiritual body—that decreeth the excommunication, deposition, and damnation, of all princes who will not exterminate all such, and absolveth their subjects from their oath of allegiance; from that beast whose mark is *per*, *per*jury, *per*fidiousness, and *per*secution, and that thinketh it doeth God acceptable service, by killing his servants, or tormenting them; from that religion which feedeth on Christ's flesh, by sacrificing those that he calleth his flesh and bones; from the infernal dragon, the father of lies, malice, and murder, and all his ministers and kingdom of darkness—Good Lord make haste to deliver thy flock, confirm their faith, hope, patience; and their joyful desire of the great, true, final, glorious deliverance. Amen, Amen, Amen!"

I have compressed within as narrow limits as possible the account of Baxter's writings on the Popish controversy; yet the reader will perceive even from this imperfect review, how deeply he entered into the subject. He left no one point in the extensive field it embraces untouched; and has supplied among his various works a complete library on Popery. Much extraneous matter is indeed to be found, and many topics are labored with tiresome prolixity; but this would not be felt at the time they were written so much as now. The subject was then deeply interesting; the fates of religion and of the kingdom trembled on the success or failure of the opposition to the Roman faith; so that all who felt for the happiness of men, and the liberty of their country, would read with avidity whatever was written in their defence.

It required no small measure of courage to occupy a prominent place on the Protestant side of this controversy, especially

during the latter years of Charles II. and the reign of James. The principles of the court, and the leanings of the high-church clergy, were all in favor of Rome; so that every man who opposed it, was marked as an enemy, and would certainly have been selected as a victim on the re-establishment of papal authority in England. Such a foe as Baxter, however, was not to be deterred by the apprehension of future danger. He had fully counted the cost when he entered the field; and should he have fallen in it while fighting in his Master's cause, he would have regarded it as a distinguished honor.

The writings of Baxter alone, show how unjust is the reproach that has sometimes been thrown on Protestant dissenters; that when the interests of Protestantism were exposed to imminent danger, they stood aloof, allowing the champions of the church of England to fight all its battles. The leading Nonconformists all took part in this controversy with Rome, as far as could be expected from men in their circumstances. But it would be unreasonable to look for the same efforts from persons deprived of their means of living, often separated from books, destitute of the means of procuring them, as from persons who were in possession of the dignified leisure and profusion of assistance, afforded by a wealthy establishment. But even under all these disadvantages, none of the dignified clergy wrote so voluminously, and few of them wrote so well on this subject, as Richard Baxter.

CHAPTER IX.

WORKS ON ANTINOMIANISM.

The Nature of Antinomianism—Its Appearance at the Reformation—Originated in Popery—Origin in England—The Sentiments of Crisp—Baxter's early Hostility to it—The chief Subject of his 'Confession of Faith'—Dr. Fowler—Baxter's 'Holiness, the Design of Christianity'—'Appeal to the Light'—'Treatise of Justifying Righteousness'—Publication of Crisp's Works—Controversy which ensued—Baxter's 'Scripture Gospel Defended'—The Influence of his Writings and Preaching on Antinomianism—Leading Errors of the System.

An inspired apostle, speaking of the law of God, declares that "it is holy, just, and good." It is a manifestation of the moral purity of the divine character, a statement of the relations which subsist between God and his creatures, with a view of the equitable claims to homage and obedience which those relations imply. While its every requirement breathes the perfect be-

nevolence of its Author, the whole tends to promote the happiness of those who obey it.

Antinomianism is enmity to this law; hatred of its purity, opposition to its justice, or suspicion of its benevolence. In this naked form of the matter, it is scarcely probable that there is under the profession of religion, a single Antinomian in the world. The sanity of that individual would be justly questionable who should maintain principles so incompatible with the common sense of mankind, and obviously subversive of the moral order of the universe.

The fact, however, is undoubted, that many persons have adopted views of the religion of Christ which virtually imply a renunciation of regard to the divine law, and tend to the entire subversion of its authority. If in their own practice there is not a violation of its precepts, they are careful it should be understood that their conduct is not indebted to the law for regulation or purity, and that they deny its claims to any authority over them. They assert the freedom of believers in Christ, from the canon as well as from the curse of the law; and that if they do what is required, it is not because it is there enjoined, or because there is any longer danger of its penalty, but because grace secures provision for holiness, and makes the believer complete in Christ.

These views are alleged to be essential to the glory of the Gospel, to exalt the grace of Christ, and to be essentially necessary to Christian peace and comfort. Other sentiments are proscribed as legal, or anti-evangelical, expressive of low views of the Saviour, indicative of a state of bondage and servility of spirit, and inconsistent with Christian confidence and liberty. The parties are thus at issue on first principles. They occupy no common ground. The Scriptures are in vain appealed to, a large portion of them being virtually abrogated, and a system of interpretation adopted setting at defiance all rules, and destructive of all enlightened deductions.

It is worthy of attention that sentiments of the above description were associated at an early period with the Protestant Reformation. Agricola, one of the friends and coadjutors of Luther, publicly avowed opinions respecting the law, which Luther found it necessary to resist and expose. He perceived the tendency of such views, not only to bring reproach on the principles of the Reformation, but to open the flood-gates of impiety, and subvert the grace of Christ itself; which his vain, unsteady, and ill-taught associate, pretended greatly to honor. The zeal and enlightened efforts of Luther, however, though they counteracted, could not altogether eradicate the evil prin-

ciples which were then disseminated, and in some quarters carried to the utmost excess of riot and profligacy.

To account for this, it is not sufficient to refer to the depravity of human nature, and a tendency to abuse the best things. Reference to the doctrines of the papal church, and to the prodigious revolution that took place in the minds of men, on the most important subjects, when the light of truth first burst in upon them, will enable us to solve in a satisfactory manner an apparently difficult problem, and to throw the disgrace of Antinomianism,—the opprobrium of Protestantism, on Popery itself.

Under that horrid system of delusion and unrighteousness, salvation is regarded as almost exclusively a human transaction, in which the Deity has a remote concern, but which must be, in a great measure, affected by man for himself, or in co-operation with his fellow mortals. The doctrines of the merit of good works, of the efficacy of penance, of the sacrifice of the mass offered by priestly hands, of the intercession of saints, and of the purification of purgatory, all tended to create the idea that redemption from sin and from wrath, with the cure of all the evils of our nature, belongs to man himself, and that the Almighty interferes in it only as he is acted upon by his creatures. On God's part no room is left for the exercise of grace; all is obtained as matter of rightful claim, or extorted by a system of barter and importunity. On the part of man, while the system seems to bring salvation within his own power, it really deprives him of every satisfactory hope of obtaining it. It either puffs him up with pride and self-conceit, derived from erroneous notions of his own virtues, or depresses him with despair of accomplishing his object by his own feeble and unaided efforts. The law (but the law degraded, obscured, and perverted) is the only part of religion recognised by Popery.

The German Reformer discovered at an early period of his career this grand flaw, the *origo mali*, of the whole system, or mystery of iniquity. It had put God out of his own place in the administration of the world; had seated a usurper on his throne, and made man himself that usurper. In the economy of redemption, Luther discovered that God, and not the creature, is the main worker; that grace, not equity, is the great principle of the divine conduct towards fallen creatures; that by the deeds of the law, no flesh can be justified before God: and hence, that salvation by faith, not by works, is the grand subject of Christianity. The doctrine of gratuitous justification, he, therefore, contended for, as the leading truth of the Gospel. As the ground of hope, he opposed it to every system of self-righteousness, to all supposed conformity to God's own law, and to every accommodation of that law to human imperfection. He regarded

salvation as that which could not be purchased by human merit, or secured as the reward of any service or suffering of men.

So much importance did Luther attach to this doctrine, that he not only viewed it as the *articulus stantis et cadentis ecclesiæ;* he himself looked at the law with something like suspicion of its being unfriendly to the grace of Christ. Jealousy for the honor of the main principle of his system, led him frequently to employ language about the law, unguarded and dangerous in its tendency; and to speak both of James and his epistle, as if he considered them inimical to his sentiments. Notwithstanding this, the general views of Luther were too enlightened and scriptural to consist with any important or practical error. He took care to obviate the inferences men might draw from some of his statements, by explanations, or caveats, that sufficiently mark the limits within which they must be understood.

Considering the number who adopted the Protestant doctrine of justification by faith, it would have been strange had they all made a judicious use of it. Unfortunately, some of those who received it with apparent joy, could see no other doctrine in the Bible. Convinced of the hopelessness of justification by the law; delivered from its bondage and terror, as well as from the bondage of the superinduced yoke of ceremonies, under which they had long groaned; they could think of nothing but of grace, liberty, and confidence. From a system which had almost excluded God from any connexion with man's salvation, they passed to one which seemed to leave nothing for man but to contemplate and admire. Beholding a perfect righteousness by which freedom from guilt is secured to the believer, entirely independent of himself, they forgot that there is a righteousness of a personal character indispensable to the enjoyment of God, which cannot be performed by proxy, or obtained by substitution. From hearing only the voice of a task master, who goaded them on by the terror of punishment, they contracted a dislike to the very language of precept, and experienced a feeling of horror at the idea of punishment, or its threatening. From considering salvation as what must be accomplished entirely by man and in him, they adopted a view of it which divests it of all connexion with his personal character and feelings. In their minds, it became the solution of a moral problem, rather than a moral cure; a sentiment to delight the understanding, more than a medicine to relieve the heart.

Such appears to me to have been the process of the early Protestant Antinomianism. In proportion to the strength of passion, and the weakness of understanding, belonging to those who received the reformed faith, these imperfect and

erroneous views were found to prevail; till, in many cases, the worst abominations of Popery were grafted on a Protestant creed.

To the operation of causes somewhat similar, the Antinomianism of modern times may frequently be ascribed. It is often the revulsion from a previous state of self-righteousness and formality to such a professed admiration of grace, as makes the party either seem to be indifferent to the obligations and claims of morality, or to teach what tends to their utter subversion. Dr. Crisp, the founder of English Antinomianism, is an illustration of this. He was originally a low Arminian, who held the merit of good works, and looked for salvation more from his own doings, than from the work and grace of a Redeemer. Having been led to see the evil and folly of these sentiments, and being a man of a weak and confused mind, he not only abandoned the errors of his former course, but at once passed to the opposite extreme of that course, and taught the grossest errors in the very grossest form. Yet the man was neither licentious himself, nor disposed to promote licentiousness in others. His professed object was to exalt the Saviour, even when he employed language most degrading to his character.

What can be more injurious to all right conceptions of God's moral administration, and of what is due to the adorable Redeemer, than the following representation? though after all it is nothing more than a mistaken mode of representing the doctrine of imputation. Crisp confounds a transfer of consequences with a commutation of persons, and is thus guilty of the absurdity of converting Christ into a sinner. "It is iniquity itself," he says, "as well as the punishment of iniquity, that the Lord laid upon Christ; he bare the sins of men, as well as he was wounded for their sins. The Lord hath laid this iniquity on him; he makes a real transaction; Christ stands as very a sinner in God's eyes as the reprobate, though not as the actor of these transgressions; yet as he was the surety, the debt became as really his as it was the principals' before it became the surety's."[s]

On the same absurd plan he reasons respecting God's views of the sins of his people before they believe, confounding all our notions of good and evil. "The Lord hath no more to lay to the charge of an elect person, yet in the height of iniquity, and in the excess of riot, and committing all the abominations that can be committed—I say even then, when an elect person runs such a course, the Lord hath no more to lay to that person's charge, than God hath to lay to the charge of a believer;

(s) Works, vol. ii. pp. 261, 262.

nay, God hath no more to lay to the charge of such a person than he hath to lay to the charge of a saint triumphant in glory.[t]

By the same effectual process he gets rid of all their sins after they do believe. "Give me a believer that hath set his footing truly in Christ; and he blasphemes Christ, that dares serve a writ of damnation upon that person. Suppose a believer overtaken in a gross sin, it is a desperate thing in any man so much as to serve a writ of damnation upon this believer; it is absolutely to frustrate and make void the Mediatorship and Saviourship of Christ, to say any believer, though he be fallen by infirmity, is in the estate of damnation. And I say unto thee thyself, whoever thou art, thou that art ready to charge damnation upon thyself, when thou art overtaken, thou dost the greatest injury to the Lord Jesus Christ that can be, for in it thou directly overthrowest the fulness of the grace of Christ, and the fulness of the satisfaction of Christ to the Father."[u]

He maintains that the law has nothing to do with the transgressions of such persons, even of the grossest kind, and thus prepares an opiate for the utmost profligacy, under the Christian name. "Suppose a member of Christ, a freeman of Christ, should happen to fall, not only by a failing or slip, but also by a gross failing, a heavy failing, nay, a scandalous falling into sin; Christ making a person free, doth disannul, frustrate, and make void, every curse and sentence that is in the law, against such a transgressor; that this member of Christ is no more under the curse when he hath transgressed, than he was before he transgressed. This I say, Christ hath conveyed him beyond the reach of the curse; it concerns him no more than if he had not transgressed. Therefore, let me tell you in a word, if ye be freemen of Christ, you may esteem all the curses of the law, as no more concerning you, than the laws of England do concern Spain, or the laws of Turkey an Englishman, with whom they have nothing to do. I do not say the law is absolutely abolished, but it is abolished in respect of the curse of it; to every person that is a freeman of Christ. So, though such a man do sin, the law hath no more to say to him, than if he had not sinned."[x]

In consistency with these principles, he maintains that sanctification, though connected with justification, is no part of the believer's way to heaven; and that inherent qualifications, or the state of the character, are doubtful evidences of the Christian's hope. In short, he confounds the divine eternal purpose of mercy with its actual application; compassion for the sins of men, with complacency in the sinner himself; the renunciation

(t) Works, vol. ii. p. 272. (u) Ibid. vol. i. p. 36.
(x) Ibid. p. 243—245.

of the law as the principle of justification, with its abolition as an eternal rule of righteousness; Christ with the believer, and the believer with Christ. All this is done with a great show of piety, and high-sounding pretensions to extraordinary zeal for the honor of the Saviour.

His writings abound with the ultraism of grace, and a lusciousness in speaking about it, which is often ludicrous and disgusting. Of which let the following serve as a specimen: "Christ is a way, as the cellars of wine are unto drunkards, that are never better than when they are at their cups; and therefore no place like the cellar, where is fulness of wine, always to be tippling and drinking: I say, Christ is such a way, and let me not be offensive to say so, for the church speaks in the same language (Canticles ii. 4, 5,) 'He brought me (saith she) into his wine cellar: stay me with flagons, comfort me with apples, for I am sick of love.' Beloved, Christ hath such variety of delicates served in continually, and such sweetness in this variety, that the soul is no longer satisfied than it is with Christ. Here is not staying with cups, much less with half cups, but staying with whole flagons; there is a kind of inebriating, whereby Christ doth, in a spiritual sense, make the believers that keep him company spiritually drunk; he overcomes them with his wine."[y]

Truly, the whole of this monstrous representation seems more like the sportings of a reveller than the production of Christian intelligence and sobriety. I have entered into this detail, to enable the reader to understand the kind of Antinomianism against which Baxter waged determined war. Dr. Crisp died in 1643. He published nothing during his lifetime; but shortly after his death, three volumes of sermons, from which the above extracts are taken, were published by some of his admirers. He appears to have had a number of followers: several persons in the ministry also imbibed and taught his sentiments; and the excitement of the civil wars matured and expanded every form of heresy and extravagance which happened to fall or to be thrown on the fertile soil of England.

"In my Confession," says Baxter, "I opened the whole doctrine of Antinomianism which I opposed; and I brought the testimonies of abundance of our divines, who gave as much to other acts, besides faith in justification, as I. I opened the weakness of Dr. Owen's reasonings for justification before faith, in his former answer to me. To which he wrote an answer, annexing it to his confutation of Biddle and the Cracovian catechism, to intimate that I belonged to that party, so that I thought it unfit to make any reply to it.

(y) Vol. i. pp. 103, 104.

"But for all the writings and wrath of men which were provoked against me, I must here record my thanks to God for the success of my controversial writings against the Antinomians. When I was in the army, it was the predominant infection. The books of Dr. Crisp, Paul Hobson, Saltmarsh, Cradock, and abundance such-like, were the writings most applauded; and he was thought no spiritual Christian, but a legalist, that savored not of Antinomianism, which was sugared with the title of free grace. Others were thought to preach the law, and not to preach Christ; and I confess the darkness of many preachers, in the mysteries of the Gospel, and our common neglect of studying and preaching grace, and gratitude, and love, did give occasion to the prevalency of this sect, which God, no doubt, permitted for our good to renew our apprehension of those evangelical graces and duties which we barely acknowledged, and in our practice almost overlooked. But this sect that then so much prevailed, became so suddenly almost extinct, that now they little appear, and make no noise at all, nor have done these many years. In which effect, those ungrateful controversial writings of my own have had so much hand, as obligeth me to very much thankfulness to God." [z]

I have already noticed Baxter's 'Aphorisms,' 'Apology,' and 'Confession of Faith,' in treating of his doctrinal writings; but as they have all, especially the last, connexion with the Antinomian controversy, it is necessary to advert to some of them again. In his 'Confession,' he goes most fully into the subject, and shows that he had studied it most profoundly. His reference to Owen, in the passage of his Life just quoted, is painful, as are all his references to that eminent man. Owen was not always correct in his phraseology on doctrinal subjects; but it is quite unnecessary to say he was neither an Antinomian, nor a high Calvinist in the modern sense of that expression. Baxter was prejudiced at his name, and therefore looked at all his writings with jealousy and dislike. The other persons to whom he refers were of different classes. Saltmarsh was a mystic and a fanatic, who sported the wildest and most incoherent rhapsodies. [a] Hobson was a military captain, and a Baptist preacher. Cradock, and Vavasor Powell, whom also Baxter elsewhere represents as an Antinomian, were both, I believe,

(z) Life, part i. p. 3.

(a) Of Saltmarsh, Crandon, who supported his principles, and attacked Baxter, says, "I have been told by some of his godly acquaintance, that the man had a natural impotency, or craziness in his brain. And the whirlwind of imaginations wherewith he was carried to a hasty taking up of opinions, and no less hurling away of them again; the much of the top, and the little of the bottom, of wit; the flashes of nimbleness, and the want of solidity and depth in his writings; his inconsistency with himself, with others, with the Scriptures; his extreme mutability, and wandering from topic to topic, without settledness anywhere, in great measure prove the report to be true."—*Crandon against Baxter's Aphorisms*, p. 138.

very excellent and laborious preachers in Wales, who had nothing beyond a tincture of high Calvinism in their sentiments.

After noticing what he considered the tendency of the opinions he opposes, and what he knew of their actual effects, he presents, in the following admirable passage, a view of his own feelings and resolutions, in reference to the controversy.

"These reasons having excited my zeal against this sect, above many others, I have accordingly judged it my duty to bend myself against them in all my writings, especially when I saw how greedily multitudes of poor souls did take the bait, and how exceedingly the writings and preachings of Saltmarsh and many of his fellows did take with them. Upon this, I perceive the men that, in any measure, go that way, are engaged against me; and how to appease them I know not. I would as willingly know the truth as some of them, if I could. Sure I am I have as much reason. My soul should be as precious to me. Christ should be as much valued; grace should be as much magnified; self should be as much denied. I am as deeply beholden to Christ and free grace as most poor sinners in the world: and should I vilify or wrong the form an opinion, or I know not what! Every man that is drawn from Christ is drawn by some contrary prevaling interest. What interest should draw me to think meanly of my Saviour or his free grace? For free remission alone, without any condition, or an eternal justification, I do not perceive but that my very carnal part would fain have it to be true. I have flesh as well as they; and if I am able to discern the pleadings or inclinations of that flesh, it runs their way, in contradiction to the spirit. The Lord knows I have as little reason to extol my own righteousness, or place my confidence in works and merits, as other men have. I must truly say, the Lord holdeth my sins much more before mine eyes, than my good works. The one are mountains to me, the other I can scarce tell whether I may own, in propriety, without many cautions and limitations. I have therefore no carnal interests of my own that I can possibly discover, to lead me against the way of these men, or engage me to contend against them. Yet I am not able to forbear. I confess I am an irreconcilable enemy to their doctrines, and so let them take me. I had as lief tell them so as hide it. The more I pray God to illuminate me in these things, the more I am animated against them. The more I search after the truth in my studies, the more I dislike them; the more I read their own books, the more do I see the vanity of their conceits: but, above all, when I do but open the Bible, I can seldom meet with a leaf that is not against them." [a]

(a) Confession, pp. 3, 4.

The most valuable part of the Confession is the statement in parallel columns, of the doctrines of Antinomianism and of Popery, in the two extremes, with what Baxter regarded as the truth placed between them. It is drawn up with great care, and is only necessary to be perused to satisfy the reader on which side the truth really lies. Not that I approve of all his own representations, they are generally too verbose, often too technical, and sometimes erroneous. But, on the whole, they contain a valuable statement of important truth, and clearly prove that Baxter was not only orthodox, but strictly evangelical. He is chiefly objectionable when he speaks of the interest of repentance and good works in our justification, as well as faith. His phraseology is unscriptural, and calculated to mislead; but when he comes to explain it, it means nothing more than that men cannot come to the kingdom of heaven without repentance and obedience, which are always the accompaniments of genuine faith.

The next performance of Baxter, that has reference to this controversy, is a small tract, which I shall introduce to the reader by the following extract from his Life.

"Dr. Edward Fowler, a very ingenious, sober Conformist, wrote two books, one, 'An Apology for the Latitudinarians,' as they were then called; the other entitled, 'Holiness the Design of Christianity,' in which he sometimes put in the word only which gave offence; and the book seemed to some to have a scandalous design to obscure the glory of free justification, under pretence of extolling holiness as the only design of man's redemption. This occasioned a few sheets of mine on the said book and question, for reconciliation, and clearing up of the point; which, when Mr. Fowler saw, he wrote to tell me that he was of my judgment, only he had delivered that more generally which I opened more particularly; and that the word was only hyperbolically spoken, as I had said. But he spake feelingly against those quarrelsome men that are readier to censure than to understand. I returned him some advice, to take heed lest their weakness and censoriousness should make him too angry and impatient with religious people, as the prelates are; and so to run into greater sin than theirs, by favoring a looser party because they are less censorious. To which he returned me so ingenuous and hearty thanks, for as great kindness as ever was showed him; which told me that free and friendly counsel to wise and good men is not lost."[b]

The treatise of Dr. Fowler, who was afterwards bishop of Gloucester, is on an important subject, and it is managed, on the whole, with considerable ability. The full title of it is, 'The

(b) Life, part iii. p. 85.

Design sf Christianity; or, a plain demonstration and improvement of this proposition, That the enduing men with inward, real righteousness, or true holiness, was the ultimate end of our Saviour's coming into the world, and is the great intendment of the blessed Gospel.' 1671. 8vo.

The work of Fowler had no intentional reference to the Antinomian controversy, though the subject belongs to the very essence of it; and the treatise contains much that could be turned to profitable account in that discussion. Baxter's tract was not designed as an answer to, but rather as a corroboration of Fowler's book, and to point out its bearing in this controversy. It is entitled, 'How far Holiness is the Design of Christianity; where the nature of holiness and morality is opened, and the doctrine of justification, imputation of sin, and righteousness, partly cleared, and vindicated from abuse. In certain propositions returned to an unknown person, referring to Mr. Fowler's treatise on this subject.' 1671. 4to. There is nothing in the body of the pamphlet which requires particular notice; but the conclusion of it is worthy of being quoted.

"Undoubtedly, holiness is the life and beauty of the soul. The spirit of holiness is Christ's agent to do his work in us, and our pledge, and earnest, and first fruit of heaven; it is Christ's work, and subordinately comes to cleanse us from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God. Christ, the Spirit, the Word, the ministry, mercies, afflictions, and all things, are to bring home our hearts to God, and to work together for our good, by making us partakers of his holiness. Our holiness is our love of God, who is most holy; and our love of God, and reception of his love, are our heaven and everlasting happiness; where, having no more sin to be forgiven, but being presented without spot or wrinkle to God, we shall forever both magnify the Lamb that hath redeemed us and washed us from all our sins in his blood, and made us kings and priests to God; and shall also, with all the holy society, sing, Holy, holy, holy, to the blessed Jehovah, who is, and was, and is to come, to whom all the heavenly host shall give this special part of praise forever." [c]

A sermon preached by Baxter at the Pinner's Hall Tuesday morning lecture, contained some remarks on the Antinomians, or those whom he considered such, which gave great offence. This was rather frequently the case with regard to him while preaching in London. His dislike to the Independents, whom he was fond of representing as Antinomians, led him to use language that was considered to convey personal reflections on some of their most approved ministers, which, as might have

(c) 'Holiness, the Design of Christianity,' pp. 21, 22.

been expected, was resented by their friends. The consequence of this kind of bickering was the separation of the two parties in that joint lecture. In the following paragraph of his Life, speaking of the transactions of the year 1674, he says:

"Having preached at Pinner's Hall for love and peace, divers false reports went current among the Separatists, and from them to other Nonconformists, that I preached against the imputation of Christ's righteousness, and for justification by our own righteousness, and that the Papists and Protestants differ but in words, &c. So that I was constrained to publish the truth of the case in a sheet of paper, called 'An Appeal to the Light,' which, though it evinced the falsehoods of their reports, and no one man did ever after justify them that ever I could hear of, yet did they persevere in their general accusation, and I had letters from several counties stating that the London accusers had written to them, that I had, both in the sermon and in that paper called 'An Appeal to the Light,' done more to strengthen Popery, than ever was done by any Papist. This was the reward of all my labors, from the separating Independents."[d]

Whether by an Independent or not, I cannot tell, but this appeal of Baxter's was answered immediately in a very smart and brief pamphlet: 'Animadversions on a sheet of Mr. Baxter's, entitled, 'An Appeal to the Light;' for the further Caution of his Credulous Readers.' Oxford. 1675. 4to. The author of this tract shows that Baxter had roundly charged persons with Antinomianism, to whom it did not belong; and that his own explanations of the subject of justification were by no means satisfactory. Both these positions, it must be acknowledged, are correct. Many of those of whom he spoke, were decided Calvinists, high rather than moderate; but who were grossly misrepresented when classed among Antinomians. Such men as Owen, Tully, Bagshaw, Bunyan, ought not to have been ranked with Saltmarsh, Hobson, and others of that stamp. Baxter often injured his own cause by his injudicious manner of advocating it. Though sometimes he states the doctrine of justification very well, in general he beclouds it with his distinctions and definitions; so that no one who understands it will prefer his explanations of this doctrine to those of the writers whom he opposes.

In the collection of pieces which Baxter published in 1676, under the general title of 'A Treatise of Justifying Righteousness,' to which reference has already been made in the chapter on his doctrinal works, Antinomianism is the chief object of his attention. The first book, which treats of imputed righteousness, and the reply to Dr. Tully's letter, enters

(d) Life, part iii. p. 154.

very fully into the history and merits of the controversy. To the discussion with Tully, or the debate in which that writer had long engaged with Bull, it is unnecessary further to advert in this place. Those who wish to enter largely into the subject must consult Nelson's 'Life of Bishop Bull,' where it is stated with great fairness and candor. In Baxter's treatise, the chief things of importance are his historical view of the progress of the Antinomian controversy, with the account of his own connexion with it; and a few passages, in which he very accurately explains the nature of that connexion which subsists between Christ and his people, in virtue of which they enjoy the benefits of his redemption. In some of these paragraphs he states the doctrine of imputation in such a way as must commend itself to every enlightened mind, and so as completely exposes the absurdity of imputed sanctification. With no less propriety he states the moral or analogical sense, in which the Scriptures speak of Christ's righteousness as the property of his people. Had he and others always spoken in the intelligible and scriptural manner, on this important subject, which is done in some parts of this volume, how much good might have been effected, and what a quantity of useless debate and altercation would have been prevented! The unnatural strain and construction which have been put on the language of Scripture, on several points in this controversy, have created great confusion, and have been attended with many injurious consequences. The ignorance and weakness of some, occasion misconceptions of Scripture phraseology, which the technical language and wire-drawn distinctions of men of superior minds often tend to increase rather than to remove.

Almost at the very close of his life, and after he judged Antinomianism in a great measure to have been destroyed, Baxter was roused to the re-consideration of the subject, in consequence of the re-publication of Dr. Crisp's works, by his son, Samuel Crisp. To this edition was prefixed a document, subscribed with twelve names of London dissenting ministers, among whom were Messrs. Howe, Griffiths, Cockain, Chauncy, Alsop, and Mather. Considering the nature of Crisp's sentiments, and the outrageous language which he employs in his sermons, it is deeply to be regretted that such men had any thing to do with the publication. They do not, however, recommend or approve the sentiments, but declare their belief that the discourses as published, with additions, by his son, really were Dr. Crisp's.

This publication very nearly occasioned a controversy between Baxter and Howe, who was one of the subscribers of the attestation. Baxter was exceedingly displeased that the doctrines of Crisp should appear, even in the slightest degree, to be counte-

nanced by such persons. He drew up a paper, therefore, with some warmth, against a practice which he thought had a very prenicious tendency. Mr. Howe, waiting on him, prevailed with him to stop it before it was published and dispersed, upon his promising to prefix a declaration, with reference to the names before Dr. Crisp's sermons (which declaration, also, should have several names to it,) to a book of Mr. Flavel's, then going to press, entitled, 'A Blow at the Root; or, the Causes and Cure of Mental Errors.' This was accordingly done; yet many remained dissatisfied.[e]

Though this prevented a personal discussion with Howe, it did not keep Baxter from engaging in the general controversy. In the preface by Samuel Crisp, the editor, Baxter considered himself attacked, though he was not named, and therefore felt that he was called once more to contend for the faith delivered to the saints. He was thus led to publish 'The Scripture Gospel Defended, and Christ, Grace, and free Justification Vindicated, against the Libertines.' 1690. 8vo. This work is divided into two books. The first is, 'A Breviate of Fifty Controversies about Justification.' The second is, 'A Dialogue between an Orthodox Zealot and Reconciling Monitor, written on the Reviving of the Errors, and the Reprinting and Reception, of Dr. Crisp's Writings,' &c. In this second book, he describes a hundred of their errors. He then endeavors to moderate men's censure of their persons: and, thirdly, assigns reasons for not replying to them more at large.

Baxter saw only the commencement of the controversy respecting Crisp's sentiments, which agitated and consumed the dissenters for more than seven years after he had gone to his rest. He was succeeded by his friend Dr. Williams, who took the lead in the discussion in support of the doctrines of what may be called moderate Calvinism; and who, after incredible exertion, and no small portion of suffering, finally succeeded in clearing the ground of the Antinomians: scarcely any of them being left among the reputed dissenting ministers of the metropolis at the beginning of the last century. The best account of this controversy, both as carried on in the church and among the dissenters, for it was not confined to one party, is given by Nelson, in his 'Life of Bishop Bull,' to which I beg to refer the reader who feels interested in its further details. I confine myself to a few additional observations on Baxter's connexion with it.

(e) Calamy's Own Life, vol. i. pp. 322, 323. The paper prefixed to Flavel's Treatise is subscribed by seven out of the twelve who had prefixed their names to the former attestation. In this paper they entirely disclaim any intention to approve of Crisp's doctrine, and declare they were merely called to attest the son's integrity as the publisher of his father's manuscripts.

I do not regard his controversial writings, as having rendered any very essential service in this discussion. He has, indeed, stated himself to be of a different opinion; and it was natural he should think so, considering how much he wrote on the subject. But two things which he did in this controversy greatly impaired his influence. He placed individuals and opinions under the charge of Antinomianism that ought not to have been thus treated. By this means he divided the true friends of that very cause which he espoused, and created additional labor to himself; besides exciting those feelings of personal irritation of which he so frequently complains.

In the next place, his own system of doctrine, in which he spoke so much of terms and conditions, and of the interest of repentance and good works in justification, was not well calculated to soften down the prejudices of the libertines whom he opposed. Many of them had good views of the freeness of grace, so far as that one position goes, and were not to be satisfied with a mode of treating the subject more objectionable than even the stricter Calvinism, to which they objected as not sufficiently high for them. If they mystified justification and imputation in one way, Baxter did it in another; so that the scriptural scholar will probably object to the explanations of both parties; though he will feel convinced that Baxter's views, when stripped of the verbiage with which they are clothed, were much nearer the truth than those of his opponents, and much less calculated to injure the souls of men.

But though his controversial writings effected little, his practical works and preaching effected a great deal in this controversy. In these, without directly entering the lists with Antinomians, and probably without thinking of them, he assailed the strong holds of their system, and demolished them to the ground. A better remedy for any one attached to their mistaken views could not, perhaps, be prescribed than a course of Baxterian reading. If the influence of Baxter's spirit should be imbibed, the cure would be certain.

One of the great evils of the system consists in grossly incorrect notions of the nature of the law of God. From these arise imperfect ideas of human responsibility, with which are necessarily connected inadequate impressions of guilt, and of the evil nature of sin. On all these subjects Baxter's views were most enlightened; and they were expressed with a power of eloquence scarcely equalled in human writings. He always speaks of the law of God like a man who well understood its spiritual character and its unquestionable claims. He pronounces on its authority, not as a matter *sub judice*, or which admitted of dispute; but which had its evidence in itself, and its answer in every mans's conscience. Sin was, in his view, not a thing of speculation,

which men required to be convinced of by argument, but matter of fact, not to be denied or explained away by the sinner. He arraigns him before the bar of God; he drags him to Sinai; he pours upon his ear the denunciation of offended Heaven: leaving him no plea to urge, no ground to stand on, without repairing to Calvary and the cross.

If the forte of some preachers and writers be the comforting of the broken-hearted, and that of others the building up of believers, the strength of Baxter lay in convincing men of sin. Man's responsibility for the powers and privileges which he enjoys, is urged by no writer with such fulness and force as it is by him. He had the deepest sense of this responsibility himself, and was thus, as well as by other considerations, induced to place it in the most powerful manner before others. High Calvinism, or Antinomianism, absolutely withers and destroys the consciousness of responsibility. It confounds moral with natural impotency, forgetting that the former is a crime, the latter but a misfortune; and thus treats the man dead in trespasses and sins, as if he were already in his grave. It prophesies smooth things to the sinner going on in his transgressions, and soothes to slumber and the repose of death the souls of such as are at ease in Zion. It assumes that, because men can neither believe, repent, nor pray acceptably, unless aided by the grace of God, it is useless to call upon them to do so. It maintains that the Gospel is only intended for elect sinners, and therefore it ought to be preached to none but such. In defiance, therefore, of the command of God, it refuses to preach the glad tidings of mercy to every sinner. In opposition to Scripture and to every rational consideration, it contends that it is not man's duty to believe the truth of God; justifying the obvious inference, that it is not a sin to reject it. In short, its whole tendency is to produce an impression on the sinner's mind, that if he is not saved, it is not his fault, but God's; that if he is condemned, it is more for the glory of the divine sovereignty, than as the punishment of his guilt.

I am not acquainted with any direct process of argument by which such persons are likely to be cured. Their judgments are commonly as weak, as their understandings are perverted and obstinate. They reason in a circle, which it is a vain endeavor to break. They dwell on the figurative language of Scripture, which they apply in the most literal sense; refusing to be subject to any laws or canons of interpretation. In such cases, the best mode of proceeding is, perhaps, that which Baxter pursued in his general preaching—to treat such men as sinners laboring under the influence of that deceitful depravity, which assumes this with a thousand other forms, for the destruction of its subject. Baxter contributed greatly to introduce this awakening

and powerful style of preaching; and thus did more to prevent and counteract Antinomianism, than by all his controversial writings.

Another fatal error of this system, respects the great design of the Gospel itself. That this should be mistaken, considering the clearness of the discovery to us, and the importance of our understanding that discovery, may appear surprising; but the fact is undoubted. The grand object of the Gospel is the redemption of sinners. That redemption necessarily includes all that belongs to the condition of the lost and ruined party. It finds man guilty, and provides for him pardon: it finds him depraved, or morally diseased, and it provides a cure. It is designed to comprehend his body, soul, and spirit, and to secure their interests forever. The blood of Christ, the great sacrifice for sin, is made the basis of the proclamation of Heaven's forgiveness to all that believe; and the application of the same blood by which the pardon is secured, by the power of the divine Spirit, is made to cleanse the soul from all its impurity. The grand loss which man has sustained by sin, is the moral image of the Creator. His nature has thus been robbed of its highest glory, and deprived of its chief enjoyment. Mere forgiveness might save from punishment, but could not render the sinner like God, or capable of beholding his resplendent face in righteousness. In order to this, the divine nature must be again restored; God must once more breathe into his nostrils the breath of life, and form him again according to his own likeness in knowledge and in true holiness.

It may be said, therefore, with the greatest propriety, that men are forgiven that they may be sanctified; they are pardoned that they may be renewed. "Holiness," says Baxter, "doubtless is that higher blessing which forgiveness tendeth to, as a means to the end: even that God may have his own again, which was lost, and man may again be nearer and liker to God; fitter to know, love, and honor him, and be happy therein." This conformity to God, is the end of the divine predestination; [f] the end of the divine election; [g] the grand end of the death of Christ; [h] the object of all the injunctions of the word of God; [i] and the leading design of all the discipline of his providence. [k]

Antinomianism, so far from regarding the moral cure of human nature as the great object and design of the Gospel, does not take it in at all, but as it exists in Christ, and becomes our's by a figure of speech. It regards the grace and the pardon as every thing, the spiritual design or effect as nothing. Hence its opposition to progressive, and its zeal for imputed sanctification; the former is intelligible, and tangible, but the latter is a fig-

(f) Rom. viii. 29. (g) Ephes. i. 4. (h) Ibid. v. 25—27.
(i) Heb. xii. 10. (k) 1 Peter i. 15, 16.

ment of the imagination. Hence its delight in expatiating on the eternity of the divine decrees, which it does not understand, but which serve to amuse and to deceive; and its dislike to all the sober realities of God's present dealings and commands. It exults in the contemplation of a Christ who is a kind of concretion of all the moral attributes of his people, to the overlooking of that Christ who is the Head of all that in heaven and on earth bear his likeness; and while unconscious of possessing it. It boasts in the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints, while it believes in no saint but one, that is Jesus, and neglects to persevere. "The dreamer must feel that sin is a substantial ill, in which himself is fatally implicated, not a mere abstraction to be discoursed of; he must learn that the righteous God deals with mankind on terms perfectly adapted to the intellectual and moral conformation of human nature, of which He is the author; and he must know that salvation is a deliverance in which man is an agent, not less than a recipient." [l]

The whole object and aim of Baxter's preaching and practical writings, were to promote holiness as the grand end of religion; and he who proposes another or inferior end of his ministry, aims at something different from the main design of the Gospel of Christ. Baxter sometimes mistook the means of accomplishing his object, and employed measures which not only failed to convince his opponents, and correct the evils of which he complained, but actually exasperated them. But we invariably perceive, both in his controversial and practical writings, the subject which was uppermost in his thoughts and desires. His definitions are sometimes incorrect, his distinctions are often injudicious, and his language frequently captious and provoking; but his own life was blameless and harmless, his character was formed on the ground of Gospel holiness, and his great and increasing anxiety was, to produce in others the enjoyment of the same salvation which he had himself received, and the purifying influence of its glorious hope. [m]

(l) 'Natural History of Enthusiasm,' p. 89.

(m) The late Rev. Andrew Fuller was one of the ablest antagonists of Antinomianism in modern times. In 'The Gospel worthy of all Acceptation,' and the Defence of it, and a posthumous treatise on Antinomianism published in his works, beside several other of his pieces, there are some admirable views of the subject. In his Life, by Dr. Ryland, there is a good deal of interesting information respecting the state and progress of High Calvinism during the last century. A very able and important review of Fuller's writings on this, and, indeed, all the subjects which engaged his pen, is given in Morris's 'Memoirs of Fuller,' which I recommend to the reader's attention who wishes to examine this topic at length.

CHAPTER X.

WORKS ON BAPTISM, QUAKERISM, AND MILLENARIANISM.

Introductory Remarks—Controversy with Tombes—'Plain Proof of Infant Baptism'—Answered by Tombes—'More Proofs of Infant Church Membership'—Controversy with Danvers—'Review of the State of Christian Infants'—Controversy with the Quakers—Early Behavior of the Quakers—'Worcestershire Petition to Parliament'—'Petition Defended'—'Quaker's Catechism'—'Single Sheets' relating to the Quakers—Controversy with Beverly on the Millenium—Account of Beverly—'The Glorious Kingdom of Christ described'—Answered by Beverly—Baxter's 'Reply'—Conclusion.

Considering the variety of subjects which form strictly, or by implication, the divine revelation of the sacred Scriptures, and the diversity which characterises the modes of thinking and circumstances of men, by which they are more or less influenced in forming their opinions of the will of God, it is not surprising that religious controversies have in every age of the Christian church been very numerous. Sometimes they relate to matters of great importance, and then require to be viewed with that seriousness and care, which are always becoming when such subjects are discussed. At other times they relate to subjects of inferior magnitude, respecting which men of equal integrity and decision of Christian character may differ, without any impeachment of their principles or sincerity. It has often happened, however, that these inferior points have been discussed with a warmth and violence altogether unsuitable, and which have tended to exasperate and to wound, instead of producing reconciliation and healing. Asperity, crimination, and provoking language, have been the bane of religious controversy, and have excited the most powerful prejudice against it on the part of many who might otherwise have been greatly benefited by a calm and enlightened discussion of subjects, respecting which they are imperfectly informed. Truth, however, has sometimes derived advantage, while the disputers about it have been injured. Light has been extracted by the friction and collision of contending bodies; and after the noise and the smoke have passed away, the conflict has appeared to be not altogether in vain.

The period during which Baxter lived, was distinguished for the intense earnestness with which every religious subject, great and little, was investigated and debated. While the great interests of truth and godliness were not neglected, all that was

minute was looked at with microscopic attention, and often magnified beyond its due dimensions and importance. This may, perhaps, be thought applicable to the subjects to which the present chapter is devoted; though some of the topics will be found of considerable interest. They will, at least, enable us to form a more adequate estimate of the times of Baxter, and present us with some of the active and bustling men of the period.

The controversy respecting the subjects and mode of baptism, is one of long standing in the church, and is still, seemingly, as far from being settled as ever. It is not my object at present to enter into the nature of the controversy, or to pronounce on which side the strength of the argument lies, but to give a view of Baxter's writings and efforts in relation to it. His chief antagonist in this debate, was John Tombes, B. D., minister of Bewdley, a man of considerable learning and talents, and one of the most voluminous writers on baptismal controversy which that fruitful subject has furnished. Of the origin of the war between him and Baxter, the latter has left the following account: "Mr. Tombes, who was my neighbor, within two miles, denying infant baptism, and having wrote a book or two against it, was not a little desirous of the propagation of his opinion, and the success of his writings. He thought that I was the chief hinderer, though I never meddled with the point. Whereupon he came constantly to my weekly lectures, waiting for an opportunity to fall upon that controversy in his conference with me; but I studiously avoided it, so that he knew not how to begin. He had so high a conceit of his writings, that he thought them unanswerable, and that none could deal with them in that way. At last, somehow he urged me to give my judgment of them; when I let him know that they did not satisfy me to be of his mind, but went no further with him. Upon this he forebore coming any more to our lecture; but he unavoidably contrived to bring me into the controversy, which I shuuned. For there came unto me five or six of his chief proselytes, as if they were yet unresolved, and desired me to give them in writing the arguments which satisfied me for infant baptism. I asked them whether they came not by Mr. Tombes' directions; and they confessed that they did. I asked them whether they had read the books of Mr. Cobbett, Mr. Marshall, Mr. Church, Mr. Blake, for infant baptism; and they told me, no. I desired them to read what is written already, before they called for more, and then come to me, and tell me what they had to say against them. But this they would by no means do, they must have my writings. I told them, that now they plainly confessed that they came upon a design to promote their party by contentious writings, and not in sincere desire to be in-

formed, as they pretended. To be short they had no more modesty than to insist on their demands, and to tell me, that if they turned against infant baptism, and I denied to give them my arguments in writing, they must lay it upon me. I asked them, whether they would continue unresolved till Mr. Tombes and I had done our writings, seeing it was some years since Mr. Blake and he began, and had not ended yet. But no reasoning served the turn with them, they still called for my written arguments. When I saw their factious design and immodesty, I bade them tell Mr. Tombes, that he should neither thus command me to lose a year's time in my weakness in quarrelling with him, nor should have his end in insulting over me, as if I fled from the light of truth. I therefore offered him, if we must needs contend, that we might do it the shortest and most satisfactory way, by spending one day in a dispute at his own church, where I should attend him, that his people might not remain unsatisfied, till they saw which of us would have the last word; and after that we would consider of writing.

"So Mr. Tombes and I agreed to meet at his church on the first day of January, 1649. And in great weakness thither I came, and from nine of the clock in the morning till five at night, in a crowded congregation, we continued our dispute; which was all spent in managing one argument, from infants' right to church-membership to their right to baptism; of which he often complained, as if I assaulted him in a new way, which he had not considered of before. But this was not the first time that I had dealt with Anabaptists, few having so much to do with them in the army as I had. In a word, this dispute satisfied all my own people, and the country that came in, and Mr. Tombes' own townsmen, except about twenty whom he had perverted, who gathered into his church; which never increased to above twenty-two, that I could learn." [n]

So much for Baxter's account of this personal rencounter. Wood, who was no friend to either party, says, "'Tis verily thought that Tombes was put upon the project of going to Brewdley purposely to tame Baxter and his party, who then carried all the country before them. They preached against one another's doctrines, and published books against each other. Tombes was the Coryphæus of the Anabaptists, and Baxter of the Presbyterians. Both had a very great company of auditors, who came many miles on foot round about to admire them. Once, I think oftener, they disputed face to face; and their followers were like two armies: and at last it came to pass, that they fell together by the ears, whereby hurt was done, and the civil magistrate had much ado to quiet them. All scholars, there

(n) Life, part i. p. 96.

and present, who knew the way of disputing and managing arguments, did conclude that Tombes got the better of Baxter by far." [o]

The verbal dispute, as might be expected, soon assumed a more tangible from, and appeared in print. Baxter, having in the dedication to the first edition of his 'Saint's Rest,' referred to his dispute at Bewdley, and to the victory which he conceived he had there obtained, Tombes shortly afterwards published 'An Antidote against the Venom' contained in this passage, which occasioned Baxter to publish his principal work on this subject: 'Plain Scripture Proof of Infants' Church Membership and Baptism; being the arguments prepared for, and partly managed in, the public dispute with Mr. Tombes, at Bewdley, on the first day of January, 1649. With a full reply to what he then answered, and what is contained in his sermon since preached, in his printed books, his MS. on 1 Cor. vii. 14: with a reply to his valedictory oration at Bewdley; and a Correction for his Antidote.' 1650. 4to.

In the preface to this treatise he gives some account of its "conception and nativity," from which I shall present an extract or two. The progress of his mind respecting baptism, which is remarkably similar to the process through which many individuals have gone in reference to the same subject, is thus stated by him: "When I was called forth to the sacred ministerial work, though my zeal was strong, and I can truly say, that a fervent desire of winning souls to God was my motive, yet being young, and of small experience, and no great reading, being then a stranger to almost all the fathers, and most of the schoolmen, I was a novice in knowledge, and my conceptions were uncertain, shallow, and crude. In some mistakes I was confident, and in some truths I was very doubtful and suspicious. Among others, by that time I had baptized but two children at Bridgnorth, I began to have some doubt of the lawfulness of infant baptism, whereupon, I silently forbore the practice, and set myself, as I was able, to the study of the point. One part of my temptation was the doctrine of some divines who ran too far in the other extreme. I had read Dr. Burgess, and some years after Mr. Bedford, for baptismal regeneration; and heard it in the common prayer that God would bless baptism to the infant's regeneration, which I thought they had meant of a real and not a relative change. I soon discerned the error of this doctrine, when I found in Scripture that repentance and faith in the aged were ever prerequisite, and that no word of God did make that the end to infants which was prerequisite in others; that signs cannot, by moral operation, be the instru-

(o) Athen. Oxon. vol. iii. p. 1063.

ments of a real change on infants, but only of a relative; and that to dream of a physical instrumentality, was worse than popish, and to do that in baptism which transubstantiation hath done in the Lord's-supper, even to tie God to the constant working of a miracle.

"Upon my first serious study, I presently discerned that though infants were not capable of what is before expressed, nor of every benefit by baptism, as are the aged, yet that they were capable of the principal ends; that it might be a sign to enter them church members, and solemnize their dedication to Christ, and engage them to be his people, and to take him for their Lord and Saviour, and so to confer on them remission of sins, and what Christ by the covenant promiseth to the baptized.

"Yet did I remain doubtful some time after, by reason the Scriptures spoke so sparingly of infant baptism, and because my apprehensions of those things, which in themselves were clear and certain, remained crude and weak till time had helped them to digest and ripen. And the many weak arguments which I met with in the words and writings of some divines, to which I formed most of the same answers as Mr. T. now doth, were not the least stumbling-block in my way. I resolved, therefore, silently to forbear the practice while I further studied the point. And being more in doubt about the other sacrament than this, I durst not adventure upon a full, pastoral charge, but to preach only as a lecturer till I were fully resolved. In which state I continued where I now am, till I was removed by the wars, still thinking and speaking very favorably of mere Anabaptists." [p]

He then proceeds to give an account of the discussions which took place on this subject while he was in Coventry; of the full examination of it which he was there led to institute; and of the progress of his controversy with Tombes, as already stated. According to his account, he was instrumental in Mr. Tombes' coming to Bewdley; and he solemnly avers, that throughout the whole affair Tombes was the aggressor. He indeed told a different tale; and a good deal of angry correspondence took place between them. To determine the question, who was the first and principal aggressor, is now unnecessary; and the detail of all the circumstances which finally led to Baxter's publication, would be as tedious as it would be unprofitable. The volume itself contains a considerable portion of valuable matter relative to the controversy, and also a great deal that is irrelevant. It abounds with numerous and subtle distinctions, for which most of Baxter's controversial writings are distinguished. It presents a great deal that would exceedingly puzzle an adversary to answer, and much of which he might take advantage. One of his

(p) Preface, pp. 2, 3.

great objects is to settle the right of infants to be church members, which he considered of more importance than their baptism; but it is difficult to arrive at a satisfactory idea of all that he intended by their membership.

Tombes replied in his 'Precursor; or, a Forerunner to a large view of a Dispute concerning Infant Baptism.' 1652. 4to. This large work he produced at three several times, making in all two very thick, closely-printed quarto volumes. Its general title is, 'Antipædobaptism; or, no plain or obscure proof of Infants' Baptism or Church-Membership,' &c. In this voluminous production he replies to Baxter, Marshall, Geree, Cobbet, Blake, Church, Stephens, Homes, Featley, Hammond, Baillie, Brinslee, Sydenham, Fuller, Drew, Lyfford, Carter, Rutherford, Cragge, Cotton, Stalham, Hall, and others. It was published between the years 1652 and 1657; and affords no small proof of the industry of its author, as well as of his devoted zeal in the cause which he had espoused.

Baxter's work passed through several editions, a proof of the interest then taken in the controversy; in the third of which, he notices Tombes' 'Precursor,' and several other publications for and against him. His own account of the work supplies all the additional information respecting it which it is necessary to introduce. "The book," he says, "God blessed with unexpected success to stop abundance from turning Anabaptists, and reclaiming many, both in city and country, and some of the officers of the Irish and English forces, and gave a considerable check to their proceedings. Concerning it, I shall only tell the reader, that there are towards the latter part of it, many enigmatical reflections upon the Anabaptists, for their horrid scandals, which the reader that lived not in those times will hardly understand; but the cutting off the king, and rebelling against him and the parliament, the Ranters and other sects that sprung out of them, the invading of Scotland, and the approving of these, were the crimes there intended; which were not then to be more plainly spoken of, when their strength and fury were so high. After the writing of that book, I wrote a postscript against the doctrine of Dr. Burgess and Mr. Thomas Bedford, which I supposed to go on the other extreme; and therein I answered part of a treatise of Dr. Samuel Ward's, which Mr. Bedford published; which proved to be Mr. Thomas Gataker's, whom I defended, who is Dr. Ward's censor; but I knew it not till Mr. Gataker after told me.

"But, after these writings, I was greatly in doubt whether it be not certain that all the infants of true believers are justified and saved, if they die before actual sin. My reason was, because it is the same justifying, saving covenant of grace which their parents and they are in, and as real faith and repentance is that

condition on the parents' part which giveth them their right to actual remission and adoption; so to be the children of such is all the condition which is required in infants, in order to the same benefits; and without asserting this, the advantage of the Anabaptists is greater than every one doth imagine. But I never thought with Dr. Ward, that all baptized children had this benefit and qualitative sanctification also; nor with Dr. Burgess and Mr. Bedford, that all converted at age had inherent seminal grace in baptism certainly given them; nor with Bishop Davenant, that all justly baptized had relative grace of justification and adoption; but only that all the infants of true believers, who have right to the covenant and baptism in *foro cœli*, as well as in *foro ecclesiæ*, have also thereby right to the pardon of original sin, and to adoption, and to heaven, which right is by baptism sealed and delivered to them. This I wrote to Mr. Gataker, who returned me a kind and candid answer, but such as did not remove my scruples; and this occasioned him to print Bishop Davenant's disputations with his answer. The opinion, which I most incline to, is the same which the Synod of Dort expresseth, and that which I conjecture Dr. Davenant meant, or I am sure came next to."[q]

Tombes, in the third part of his 'Antipædobaptism,' published in 1659, introduced some private correspondence between Baxter and himself, which had taken place subsequently to Baxter's last publication on infant church-membership, and baptism; and there replied at length to some of his sentiments. Baxter, after a lapse of nineteen years, published 'More Proofs of Infant Church-Membership, and consequently their Rights to Baptism; or, a Second Defence of our Infant Rights and Mercies.' 1675. 8vo.

This volume is divided into three parts, which contain, he tells us, "The plain proof of God's statute or covenant for Infants' Church-Membership from the creation, and the continuance of it till the institution of baptism; with the defence of that proof against the frivolous exceptions of Mr. Tombes. A confutation of Mr. Tombes' arguments. A confutation of the strange forgeries of Mr. Danvers against the ambiguity of infant baptism, and of his many calumnies against myself and writings. A catalogue of fifty-six new commandments and doctrines, which he and the sectaries who join with him in those calumnies own. Animadversions on Mr. Danvers' reply to Mr. Wells;" all of which he declares to be "extorted by their unquiet importunity."[r]

(q) Life, part i. p. 109.

(r) The doctrine of the Synod of Dort, on the subject referred to by Baxter, is as follows:—"Quando quidem, &c.—That is, Seeing that we are to judge of the will of God by his word, which testifies that the children of believers are holy; not, indeed, by nature, but by the benefit of the gracious covenant, in which they

The dispute was now enlarged, including others as well as Tombes. Danvers was a private gentleman of small fortune who had joined the Baptists in the time of the Commonwealth. He was then governor of Stafford, and a justice of the peace. He was a fifth-monarchist in some of his principles, though he did not go the full length of the party in regard to practice. He was apprehended as one of them, and lodged in the Tower, where he appears to have remained many years, as he only obtained his release in 1671. Having been at some private meetings, where measures were concerted in favor of the Duke of Monmouth, he was obliged to flee to Holland after the failure of that attempt, where he died shortly afterwards.[s]

His work in this controversy, to which Baxter refers, is one of considerable labor: 'A Treatise on Baptism, wherein that of Believers, and that of Infants, is examined by the Scriptures, with the history of both, out of Antiquity,' &c. As an historical work, it displays very considerable research. His opponents accused him of doing injustice to the fathers and ecclesiastical writers of the primitive church; and both parties found in the ambiguity and uncertainty of these authorities, sufficient employment for their time and patience. He was answered by Blinman and Wills, as well as by Baxter, and defended himself in three distinct treatises, published in 1675.

In the same year in which Baxter's last work was published, he produced another small performance, to which it had led—'Richard Baxter's Review of the State of Christian Infants.' 1676. 8vo. In this pamphlet, he inquires "whether children should be entered in covenant with godly baptism, and be visible members of his church, and have any covenant right to pardon and salvation?" This publication was occasioned by Mr. E. Hutchinson, Mr. Danvers, and Mr. Tombes, all of whom had assailed him.[t]

It is deeply to be regretted that this controversy should have so long distracted the church of Christ, and that many eminent men have devoted so large a portion of valuable time and strength to its discussion. On no one point of Christian practice has so much been written, and on both sides to so little purpose, as the

are comprehended along with their parents; pious parents ought not to doubt of the election and salvation of their children whom God hath called in infancy out of this life."—*Art. on Predestination*, Sect. 17. Davenant was one of the English divines deputed by King James to attend the Synod of Dort. He was then professor of divinity in the University of Cambridge, and was afterwards made bishop of Salisbury.

(s) Crosby's Hist. of the Baptists, vol. iii. p. 97.

(t) On the subject of infant salvation, which has been a source of great anxiety and distress to many, I beg to refer the reader to the following work, which is far more satisfactory than any thing else known to me on this deeply interesting topic—'An Essay on the Salvation of all Dying in Infancy; including Hints on the Adamic and Christian Dispensations,' by the Rev. David Russell, of Dundee. 12mo. 2d edit. 1823.

parties seem nearly as far from agreement as ever. It has tended greatly to injure the cause of religion among the Dissenters, having divided their affections and reduced their strength in almost every place. Of the same mind on every other topic of importance, it is lamentable that a difference of opinion respecting one ordinance, and that of a personal nature, affecting each individual but once in his life, should cause greater strife and injury than all other subjects of difference together. The doctrine of free communion, however, as far as baptism is concerned, promises fair, in the course of time, to extinguish a controversy, which all the books that have been written upon it have entirely failed to determine. In this result, had he lived to witness it, none would have rejoiced more than Baxter; as he was more zealous in contending for the communion of all Christians, than for infant baptism, notwithstanding his warmth in maintaining it.

The Quakers, as a distinct sect, made their first appearance in the times of Baxter, and during the agitations of the civil wars. His controversies with them were much briefer than those in which he engaged with the Baptists, but were sufficiently keen while they lasted. His opinion of them has been already given in the first part of this work. If that opinion be regarded as severe, it should be remembered that the body referred to has undergone a great change for the better, in its spirit and mode of acting, since the time of Baxter. He complains bitterly of the treatment that he experienced from them, which must, therefore, be regarded as an apology for his manner of treating them in return. Speaking of them many years after their first appearance, he says:

"The Quakers, in their shops, when I go along London streets, say, 'Alas! poor man, thou art yet in darkness.' They have oft come into the congregation, when I had liberty to preach Christ's Gospel, and cried out against me as a deceiver of the people. They have followed me home, crying out in the streets, 'The day of the Lord is coming, when thou shalt perish as a deceiver.' They have stood in the market-place, and under my window, year after year, crying out to the people, 'Take heed of your priests, they deceive your souls!' and if they saw any wear a lace or neat clothing, they cried out to me, 'These are the fruit of thy ministry.' If they spake to me with the greatest ignorance or nonsense, it was with as much fury and rage as if a bloody heart had appeared in their faces; so that though I never hurt, or occasioned the hurt, of one of them that I know of, their tremulent countenances told me what they would have done had I been in their power. This was from 1656 to 1659." [u]

(u) Works, vol. xvi. p. 152.

The idea of danger from them, intimated in this passage, was doubtless an entire mistake. Their words and spirit were frequently violent and provoking; but their conduct was invariably harmless. Had they been less opposed, and treated in a more Christian manner, they would have attracted less attention, and been less formidable to those who opposed them. Considering the abuses of divine ordinances which had so long and so extensively prevailed, it is not surprising that such a system as Quakerism should have arisen; and it may, perhaps, have answered a useful purpose in calling the attention of men professing Christianity to the great design of all its ordinances, and to which they ought ever to be regarded as subservient—the promotion of spirituality of mind, and the enjoyment of communion with God.

To form a correct idea of Baxter's writings on this subject, it is necessary to advert to his fears of the subversion of the Christian ministry in the nation by some of the measures of the Rump Parliament. Exceedingly alarmed by certain reports which he had heard, he exerted his influence, which appears to have been very powerful, in the county of Worcester, to promote an appeal to Parliament. The effect of this appeared in "The humble petition of many thousands, gentlemen, freeholders, and others, of the county of Worcester, to the parliament of the Commonwealth of England, in behalf of the able, faithful, godly ministry of this nation." This petition was drawn up by Baxter, and presented by Colonel Bridges and Mr. Thomas Foley, on the 22d of December, 1652. It was afterwards printed, with the answer of the speaker, in the name of the House, thanking the petitioners for their zeal and good affections, and promising to take the petition into consideration. It expresses the fears of the petitioners, founded on various circumstances which are enumerated, that an attempt would be made to put down the ministry in the kingdom. It states the importance of the ministry both to the temporal and the spiritual good of the country; with the sin and danger of subverting it. It therefore prays for the preservation and encouragement of faithful ministers; that a suitable provision might be made for them; that attention might be paid to the dark parts of England and Wales; for the continued preservation of the universities and schools of learning; and lastly, that measures might be taken to heal the religious divisions which prevailed, and for the establishment of a better system of church government.

This petition was very offensive to those who viewed with an unfavorable eye a standing ministry, especially as supported by the state. The Quakers, in particular, who were then beginning to attract attention, were exceedingly hostile to the prayer presented to parliament; and George Fox attacked it in a pam-

phlet, entitled 'The Threefold Estate of Antichrist.' This brought Baxter into the field with—

'The Worcestershire Petition to the Parliament for the Ministry of England, Defended by a Minister of Christ in that County, in answer to sixteen queries, printed in a book called, A Brief Discovery of the Threefold Estate of Antichrist,' &c. 1653. 4to. Baxter defends his petition against the queries contained in this performance, and retaliates with his characteristic acuteness in some counter queries at the end.

That the parliament then sitting seriously meditated the abolition, either of the ministry or of the tithes, is improbable. But a petitition had been presented to it by a council of officers held at Whitehall on the 12th of August, 1652, which, among other things, prayed "that profane, scandalous, and ignorant ministers might be ejected, and men approved for godliness and gifts encouraged; and that a convenient maintenance might be provided for them, and the unequal, troublesome, and contentious way of tithes be taken away."[x] This petition was referred to a committee, after the speaker had, in the name of the House, thanked the petitioners for their zeal in the public cause. The report of this committee has been already given in page 139; from which it appears, that nothing further was recommended than some arrangements respecting the payment of tithes. It was probably with a view to counteract this petition, however, that Baxter drew up the one from Worcestershire. That there was just ground of complaint against many of the clergy, is evident enough from Baxter's own account of them; and had the Rump Parliament enacted some measure for the support of the clergy, less liable to objection and abuse than the tithe system, it would have deserved well of the country, and saved its successors the labor and the honor which yet await them. It is evident that an attempt was made, which was both wise and moderate in itself, and would no doubt have been improved, till it had finally abolished an extensive and inveterate evil, had the powers which then were been permanently established.

Speaking of the petition and the events which followed it, he says in his own Life, "The sectaries were greatly annoyed, and one wrote a vehement invective against it; which I answered in a paper called 'The Defence of the Worcestershire Petition,' (which, by an oversight, is maimed by the want of the accuser's queries,) I knew not what kind of person he was that I wrote against, but it proved to be a Quaker; they being just now rising, and this being the first of their books, as far as I can remember, that I had ever seen.

"Presently, upon this, the Quakers began to make a great

(x) Goodwin's Commonwealth, vol. iii. p. 419.

stir among us, acting the part of men in raptures, speaking in the manner of men inspired, and every where railing against tithes and ministers. They sent many papers of queries to divers ministers about us; to one of the chief of which I wrote an answer, and gave them as many more questions to answer, entitling it 'The Quaker's Catechism.' These pamphlets being but one or two days' work, were no great interruption to my better labors, and as they were of small worth, so also of small cost. The same ministers of our country, that are now silenced, are they that the Quakers most vehemently opposed, meddling little with the rest. The marvellous concurrence of instruments telleth us, that one principal agent doth act them all. I have oft asked the Quakers lately, Why they chose the same ministers to revile whom all the drunkards and sorcerers rail against? And why they cried out in our assemblies, Come down, thou deceiver, thou hireling, thou dog; and now never meddle with the pastors or congregations? They answer, that these men sin in the open light, and need none to discover them; that the Spirit hath his times both of severity and of lenity. But the truth is, they knew then they might be bold without any fear of suffering by it: and now it is time for them to save their skins, they suffer enough for their own assemblies." [y]

The following is the pamphlet to which he refers in the above paragraph: 'The Quaker's Catechism; or, the Quakers questioned, their questions answered, and both published for the sake of those of them that have not yet sinned unto death; and of these ungrounded novices that are most in danger of their seduction.' 1657. 4to. In an introductory address to the reader, he explains the circumstances which originated his Catechism; giving an account, in much the same terms that we have already quoted, of the manner in which the Quakers assailed himself and his brethren. He then addreses the "Separatists and Anabaptists of England," whom he classes with the Quakers, accusing them of originating the "wild generation," which is the more immediate object of his attack. Then follows a long letter to a young friend, who was first inclined to be a Baptist, but fell in with the Quakers, and whom he had endeavored to reclaim. Next comes a paper, or information taken on oath at Bristol, of one who represents some of the Quakers as disguised Romish priests: then follows the Catechism itself; in which the controversy is treated in a very desultory manner. Indeed, the doctrines of the Friends had scarcely been brought to a consistent form; it would consequently have been vain to expect that the undisciplined troops, composing their army, should either attack or be attacked in reg-

(y) Life, part i. pp. 115, 116.

ular battle. Baxter having been treated very unceremoniously, is as unceremonious in his addresses and questions to "the miserable creatures," whom he considered to be laboring under dreadful delusion. The following specimen of his questions will give the reader a fair sample of his mode of interrogating them. The subject is—the sufficiency of the light, which all men are supposed to enjoy.

"Was it sufficient before Christ preached the Gospel, and sent his apostles? or, is it now sufficient to all that never heard the Gospel? If so, is not the Gospel a vain and needless thing? or, are you Christians that dare so affirm? If the world have sufficient light, what need they your teaching, or discourse, or conviction? If all have sufficient within them, what need they any convicting grace? Why did Christ send Paul to open men's eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, if they had sufficient light before? I pray you do not disdain to tell me, when you have rubbed your eyes, if all men have sufficient light within them, why you got up into the judgment-seat, and pronounced me so oft to be in darkness, and to be void of the light, and to have none of the Spirit. If all have it, why may not I have it?"

In the same year in which he published his Catechism, he sent out a series of monthly tracts, which were chiefly intended to counteract the principles and progress of Quakerism. The first appeared in August, 1657, and is entitled, 'One Sheet for the Ministry against Malignants of all sorts.' In September, he published 'One Sheet against the Quakers;' and in the following month, 'A Second Sheet for the Ministry, justifying our Calling against Quakers, Seekers, and Papists, and all that deny us to be the Ministers of Christ.'

Into these tracts it is unnecessary to enter particularly, as their titles sufficiently explain their nature and design. They furnish additional evidence to much that has been already adduced of the ceaseless vigilance and untiring labor of Baxter. His eye was every where; his hand was in every work. Alive to all the dangers and temptations then abounding in the country, he employed, with the utmost promptness, all the means which he could devise to avert the evils, or to warn men against them. He admonished Cromwell, he addressed the parliament, and, at the same time, expostulated with a Seeker, questioned a Quaker, and catechised a child. When it was necessary, he produced a folio; when less might answer the purpose, he published a monthly tract. Well might he give the following answer to the reproaches of idleness thrown out against the ministry:

"The Quakers say, we are idle drones, that labor not, and therefore should not eat. The worst I wish you is, that you had

but my ease instead of your labor. I have reason to take myself for the least of saints, and yet I fear not to tell the accuser that I take the labor of most tradesmen in the town to be a pleasure to the body, in comparison with mine; though for the ends and the pleasure of my mind, I would not change it with the greatest prince. Their labor preserveth health, and mine consumeth it; they work in ease, and I in continual pain; they have hours and days of recreation, I have scarce time to eat and drink. Nobody molesteth them for their labor, but the more I do, the more hatred and trouble I draw upon me. If a Quaker ask me what all this labor is, let him come and see, or do as I do, and he shall know."

Baxter was, sometime after this, attacked in a huge volume with a singular title: 'The Rustic's Alarm to the Rabbies; or, the Country correcting the Universities and Clergy, and not without Cause, Contesting for the Truth against the Nursing Mothers, and their Children, &c. By way of Intercourse held in Special with four of the Clergies' Chieftains, John Owen, Thomas Danson, John Tombes, and Richard Baxter; which four *Foremen* hold the Sense and Senseless Faith of the whole Fry, &c. By Samuel Fisher, who some time went astray among the many Shepherds, but is now returned to the great Shepherd and Overseer of the Soul.' 1660. 4to. pp. 600. To this enormous volume of rant, it does not appear that any of the persons attacked, made a reply. Fisher was originally in the church, and chaplain to Sir Arthur Haselrigg: he afterwards became a Baptist, and wrote the only folio volume which I believe has ever been written on that side of the question, 'Baby Baptism, mere Babyism,' in which he animadverts on Baxter. He soon after became Quaker, and labored hard to destroy the things which he had formerly built up. He is said to have heen a man of piety and of learning, but fickle and violent. Nothing but an inspection of his books can enable any one to form an idea of the extraordinary style in which he wrote.

At a subsequent period of his life, Baxter engaged in a personal controversy on the principles of Quakerism, with William Penn, but it led to no publication on the points in debate. The discussion has been referred to in the former part of this work. By that time, the number of the Friends had greatly increased, their principles and practice had assumed a more definite form, and their conduct, in regard to the great subject of religious liberty, had entitled them to the approbation and esteem of all the friends of religion and freedom. In Penn and Barclay they found abler and more successful defenders and advocates than Fox or Fisher, who required to be met with different arguments, and in a better style and spirit, than had been employed by Baxter.

In the last year of his life, Baxter was led to engage in a controversy with the Rev. Thomas Beverly, on the subject of the Millennium, and the second advent of the Lord Jesus Christ. This is one of those subjects which appears, from time to time, to have agitated the church of Christ, from the very beginning. Even in the days of the apostles, some indulged the expectation that the coming of the Lord was at hand, and, under the influence of this feeling, appear to have relaxed in their attention to the ordinary duties of life.[z] In the subsequent ages, the doctrine of the Millennium was a favorite speculation with many, though very various and discordant sentiments were entertained respecting it. At the Reformation it had its patrons among those whose imaginations were excited by the extraordinary events of the period, to expect that the time of the restitution of all things was near. During the Commonwealth, the fifth-monarchy men brought this subject again into prominent notice: but the extravagances of some of them, and the destruction which they brought on themselves, sunk it into contempt. It was held, however, by some most respectable and learned individuals, both before and after the time of the Commonwealth. It is only necessary to mention, in proof of this, the names of Joseph Mede and Henry More; men alike distinguished for learning and talents, and for their mild and conciliatory dispositions.

Among the most strenuous and ardent supporters of this doctrine, was Thomas Beverly, a man by no means destitute of good sense, scriptural information, and ardent zeal. He was pastor of a dissenting congregation. which assembled in Cutlers' Hall, and began his career as a writer on the prophecies, about the period of the Revolution, of which he was a most devoted friend and admirer. In a work published in 1688, dedicated to the Prince of Orange, he endeavors to show that the Papacy could not last above nine years, and that the Millennium would commence in 1697. From this time to that portentous year, he continued to send forth his publications on the subject in great numbers, challenging every body to answer them. He lived to see all his prophetical calculations fail; so that on the year in which they should have commenced their fulfilment, he resigned his pastoral charge, retired into the country, and shortly after sunk into obscurity. Such was the fate of a man whose talents, ardor, and devotedness, had they been better directed, might have rendered him eminently useful; but whose misdirected zeal and erroneous calculations issued only in disappointment to himself, sorrow to his friends, and triumph to the enemies of religion.[a]

Beverly was the friend and correspondent of Baxter. He

(z) 2 Thess. ii. iii. 5—12.
(a) Wilson's Hist. of Diss. Churches, vol. ii. pp. 64—66.

admired his talents, respected his piety, and courted his acquaintance. Knowing the candor with which Baxter listened to every plausible representation on religious subjects, and being convinced that if he could but engage his attention, he would openly espouse his cause, or enter the lists against him; either of which results would answer his purpose by calling attention to his own publications. He accordingly presented him with them as they appeared, and most perseveringly solicited his observations upon them. Having published his 'Catechism of the Kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ in the Thousand Years; showing by Scripture that the great articles of the Redemption, the Resurrection, the Mystery of the Saints not dying but changed, the Judgment, the Delivering up of the Kingdom to God, all in all, cannot be explained at full dimensions without it;' he sent it to Baxter, with an earnest request to be favored with his opinion of it. The substance of Beverly's doctrine appears to be: that Christ's kingdom begins only at the Millennium: that the commencement of the Millennium and the resurrection of the saints, are parallel events; that the Millennium is the day of judgment spoken of in scripture; that during it the saints shall increase and multiply upon the earth; that the wicked shall also be upon the earth; and that a grand conflict shall take place at the battle of Armageddon, when the wicked shall be destroyed. With all this is mixed up some strange speculations about the person of Christ.

On receiving the 'Millenary Catechism,' Baxter addressed a long and kind letter to the author, proposing a series of questions to him. He assures him they were written not in a spirit of captiousness, but from a real desire of information, which he considered Beverly well qualified to supply. As these questions are not unimportant at the present time, I shall extract a few of them.

"Doth the Revelation mention *one* thousand years or *two*? If but *one*, doth not that begin upon the fall of Babylon? Why say you that Christ's kingdom beginneth at the one thousand years, when so many things tell us of his kingdom existent long before? Hath he not governed by laws, and initial execution, long before? yea, the kingdom is among us and within us. Do not the spirits of the departed just, with the angels, now constitute the general assembly above; and is not that the kingdom of Christ, and doth he not now reign over all? Shall these blessed souls come down for one thousand years, and dwell either with devils, or where devils now dwell, in the air. If they come thither with Christ at judgment, shall they dwell there so long? and is it no worse a place than where they are? Seeing the heavens that now are must then be burnt, is not the air the lower part of the heavens, or that at least, and shall Christ and the

new Jerusalem dwell in the consuming fire? I cannot possibly find what time you allot to the conflagration of heaven; whether it shall continue burning all the one thousand years, or be quickly dispached at first; nor yet what time or measure you set to the conflagration of the earth. Doth it burn all at once, or by gradations, as Dr. Cressener thinks, beginning at Rome, and so going on? or is it all the one thousand years proceeding to its dispatch? If so, it is a wonder that this long fire consumeth not Gog and Magog; and if the inhabitants fly from it, as at Etna, whither do they carry their goods, and where will they find room, both saints and sinners? Is it the new earth all the while it is burning? If it be burnt at all at the beginning, where are the surviving saints all the while?

"You avoid many difficulties by holding but one resurrection; but what then becomes of the bodies of all the wicked, who die during the one thousand years? Do soul and body go to hell unburied, or do only their souls suffer and their bodies never rise? Is there one conflagration or two? The Scriptures speak but of one; and then what becomes of your new earth at the end of the one thousand years? are not Gog and Magog burnt at last? Is your beloved city on earth in one place? and where? or over the whole earth? Is not the number that cover the camp, as the sand of the sea, with Gog and Magog, inconsistent with the description of the new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness, and with the times of restitution, when the groaning creation shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into a paradisiacal state?"[b]

Such is a specimen of the questions which Baxter proposed to Beverly, on his having transmitted to him a copy of the work which he had published. Could I have quoted them all, they would have shown how amply Baxter, even at this advanced period of his life, entered into the subject, and that no portion of his natural acuteness had yet failed him. It does not seem to have produced much effect on Beverly; and therefore, in the course of the year 1691, appeared a 4to tract, entitled 'The Glorious Kingdom of Christ described and clearly vindicated, &c., by Richard Baxter, whose comfort is only the hope of that kingdom.'

In this work he enters the lists with the Millenarians in general: with those who boldly asserted the future restoration and reign of the Jews, and the one thousand years' rest before the conflagration; with those also who expected a reign of one thousand years after the conflagration; and with Beverly in particular, in answer to his challenges and censures, of which he appears to have been very liberal. Baxter endeavors to explain the pro-

(b) Letter to Beverly.—*Baxter MSS.*

mise of the new heavens and the new earth; and contends for the everlasting duration of Christ's kingdom. He undertakes to prove that the doctrines of Beverly, and the Millenarians, are chimerical, and without foundation in Scripture; that the views commonly entertained on these subjects are in accordance with all correct interpretation of the prophecies of the Bible; that Christ's kingdom is spiritual in its nature, properly commenced at his resurrection, and will continue till the final conflagration, when it will be perfected forever in heaven.

From this work, it appears that Baxter did not believe that the ten tribes were ever so entirely lost as many suppose, and that part of them existed in the time of Christ and the Apostles; consequently that the recovery of such a body, according to the expectations of many, is not to be looked for. Nor does he appear to have believed in any national conversion of the Jewish people in their restoration to their own country, in their instrumentality for the conversion of the world, or in their future superiority over the nations. His reasonings on all these topics, cannot be given. I do not agree with him in every point, but I have no hesitation in saying, that though less known than many of his works, it is one of the acutest and best written of his numerous publications. The opinions of Beverly were not new when he wrote; they had been frequently started and exploded before. They have been repeatedly revived since, maintained with no less confidence, and propagated with equal zeal; and in future ages will probably continue to experience the same fate. One passage of Baxter's tract, relating to Beverly, I think merits to be quoted:

"Your writings make it plain, that you are a good man, of deep thoughts, fallen into a fond esteem of your new, unripe conceptions, and wrapt up thereby into a diseased conceitedness. How you will be able to bear it when Providence and experience have confuted you in 1697, I know not. But I am the more bold to foretell your failing, by my persuasion, that your exposition of the Revelation, is a mere mistake from the beginning almost to the end.

"Wonder not that nobody writeth to confute you. For men love not to trouble themselves with convincing every single man of his errors. The reason why I attempt it is, because by the seduction of some of my friends, and the general inclination of the Antinomian, Anabaptist, and separating party to this conceit of the thousand years' kingdom, I understand that your opinion, which formerly was tolerable as confined to a few conceited good men, is now becoming a great article of their faith and religion, especially since I see that in all your professed extraordinary humility, you brand all who dissent from you as semi-Sadducees of the apostacy, and constantly challenge all

pastors and doctors to answer you; and maintain (though you conform) that God's word knoweth not a clergy."[c]

Beverly published a short answer to Baxter, as full of confidence as ever. In consequence of which, Baxter brought out quickly after, another pamphlet in 'Reply to Mr. Thomas Beverly's Answer to my Reasons against his Doctrine of the Thousand Years' Middle Kingdom, and of the Conversion of the Jews.' Feb. 20, 1691. 4to. This tract consists of only twenty-one pages, and must have been among the last things of a controversial nature which Baxter wrote, as appears from the date on the title-page, where he also speaks of himself "as passing to that world where we shall see face to face." Beverly had the last word in 'The One Thousand Years' Kingdom of Christ in its full Scripture State, answering Mr. Baxter's new Treatise in opposition to it.' 1691. 4to.

Thus ended Baxter's Debate with Beverly on the subject of the Millenium; and here must terminate our account of the minor controversies in which he was engaged. Employed in such affairs during the greater part of his public life, he seems to have become so accustomed to the warfare and language of religious controversy, that it had comparatively little influence on his temper. He could pass without effort from debating Baptism to meditations on the 'Saint's Rest;' and from disputes about the Millennium, to the expression of his 'Dying Thoughts.' He opposed firmly what he believed to be error; but though he often used the language of sharpness, the law of kindness never ceased to reign in his breast.

CHAPTER XI.

POLITICAL AND HISTORICAL WORKS.

Introductory Observations—'Humble Advice'—'Holy Commonwealth'—Origin and Design of the Work—Involved the Author in much trouble—The Political Principles which it avows—Recalled by Baxter—Motives for doing so—'Church History of Bishops'—Attacked by Morrice—'True History of Bishops and Councils Defended'—'Breviate of the Life of Mrs. Baxter'—'Penitent Confession'—Conduct of Long towards Baxter—'Reliquiæ Baxterianæ'—Character of this Work—Imperfectly Edited by Sylvester—Calamy's Account of it, and its Reception—His Abridgment of it—Controversy to which it led.

It is difficult to define what ought, in particular circumstances, to be the conduct of a Christian minister respecting political affairs. Neither the profession of Christianity, nor the office of the ministry, deprives a man of his civil privileges, or of a right to exercise them. At the same time, "all things which

(c) Pp. 45, 46. It is a very curious fact, which appears to have struck Baxter,

are lawful may not be expedient." Every man, and especially every minister of Christ, is bound to study what may tend most effectually to promote the grand design of Christianity, and to abstain as much as possible, both from giving offence to the weak, and exciting unnecessary prejudices against him on the part of others. It is easy to act when the affairs of a country are moving on with regularity and smoothness; but when "the foundations are all out of course," and "civil dudgeon" runs high, the most inoffensive and conscientious persons may frequently be exposed to great difficulty. Taking part in their country's affairs will expose them to the charge of meddling and sedition; while entire neutrality may probably bring upon them the no less injurious insinuation of selfish indifference. To these difficulties religious people were greatly exposed during she trying period of England's struggle for civil and religious freedom.

Baxter was not a man formed for neutrality. It was not in his nature to avoid taking part with the weak and righteous, and opposing their oppressors. His mind entered into every subject which interested his countrymen, and regardless of consequences to himself, he fearlessly committed both his actions and his opinions to the public. In the former part of this work, we have seen how he joined the army of the Commonwealth, with his reasons for so doing. He was a lover of constitutional monarchy, but an enemy of despotism; and regarding the government as determined to crush the religion and liberties of his country, he felt himself bound to support those whom he viewed as its best and only friends, though many of their measures he saw reason to condemn and oppose.

It must be confessed, however, that he was not at home on political matters. They were uncongenial to his heavenly mind, and to all his habits and pursuits. Compliance with the wishes of others, the promotion of what he considered the peace and interests of religion and the commonwealth, or the defence of himself against gross misrepresentations, were the motives by which he appears to have been generally actuated in all his writings of this description. Some of the works which are now to come before us contain much information respecting the period they relate to, and are, on this account, still important and interesting.

The first of these which claims our attention, 'The Wor-

as he refers to it more than once in this pamphlet, that the abettors of the doctrine of the Millenium, against which he contended, were mostly of two classes, Conformists and high Calvinists. That this is the case still, is known to all who are acquainted with the parties who have agitated this question in latter years. This is not the place to account for this co-incidence, but it is certainly worthy of some attention. Beverly was a Dissenting Conformist, and attached to the high side of the Christian controversy in which he took part.

cestershire Petition,' with Baxter's defence of it, may be regarded as the earliest of his political performances; but as sufficient notice of them has been taken in treating of the Quaker controversy, with which these pamphlets were closely connected, it is unnecessary to advert to them again. His next work in this department was not published by himself. 'Richard Baxter's Humble Advice; or, the Heads of those Things which were offered to many Honorable Members of Parliament by Mr. Richard Baxter, at the end of his Sermon, December 24, at the Abbey of Westminster: with some Additions, as they were delivered by him to a friend, that desired them, who thought meet to make them public.' 1655. 4to. There is nothing in this tract worthy of particular notice; it contains some instructions, which the author thought calculated to promote reformation and peace.

The work which, of all others written by Baxter, created the strongest sensation at the time, and occasioned the greatest trouble to him afterwards, was his 'Holy Commonwealth; or, Political Aphorisms: opening the true principles of Government; for the healing of the *mistakes*, and resolving the *doubts*, that most endanger and trouble ENGLAND at this time; and directing the desires of sober Christians that long to see the Kingdoms of this world become the Kingdoms of the Lord and of his Christ.' 1659. 8vo. The following is his own account of the origin and object of this work, with the treatment which it experienced.

"The book which hath furnished my enemies with matter of reviling, which none must dare to answer, is my 'Holy Commonwealth.' The occasion of it was this: when our pretorian sectarian bands had cut all bonds, pulled down all government, and after the death of the king had twelve years kept out his son, few men saw any probability of his restitution, and every self-conceited fellow was ready to offer his model for a new form of government. Mr. Hobbes' 'Laviathan' had pleased many. [d] Mr. Thomas White, the great Papist, had written his Politics in English, for the interest of the Protector, to prove that subjects ought to submit and subject themselves to such a change. [e]

(d) Hobbes produced his 'Leviathan; or, the Matter, Form, and Power of a Commonwealth,' in 1651. Few books have occasioned more or fiercer controversy than this production of the philosopher of Malmsbury. It is an able, learned, but most paradoxical and irreligious performance. Its principles would justify all social disorder and all impiety. But the scales of the Leviathan are very hard to penetrate, and have injured most of the weapons which have been tried upon it. Lord Clarendon '*surveyed*' it, and Bishop Bramhall endeavored to '*catch*' it; but the monster still lived, exercising the ingenuity and courage of many a successive combatant. The most formidable of his antagonists were —Cumberland, in his work 'De Legibus Naturæ,' and Cudworth, in the 'Intellectual System.'

(e) The book of White to which Baxter here refers is, 'The Grounds of Obedience and Government,' which appeared in 1655. The author was a Catholic

Mr. James Harrington (they say, by the help of Mr. H. Neville [f]) had written a book in folio for a democracy, called Oceana, [g] seriously describing a form near to the Venetian, and setting the people upon the desires of a change. After this, Sir H. Vane and his party were about their sectarian democratical model, [h] which Stubbs defended. [i] Rogers, [k] Needham, [l] and Mr. Bagshaw, [m] had also written against monarchy before. In the end of an epistle before my book on 'Crucifying the World,' I had spoken a few words against this innovation and opposition to monarchy; and having especially touched upon 'Oceana' and 'Leviathan,' Mr. Harrington seemed in a Bethlehem rage; for

priest, possessing considerable talents as a philosopher, and whose writings, both on theological and philosophical subjects, were numerous. He disputed some of the dogmas of his own church, and used to wrangle with Hobbes, with whom he was intimate. In the book above referred to, he justifies the resistance offered to Charles I., and supported the government of Cromwell. He died in 1676, in the seventy-fourth year of his age.

(f) Henry Neville, according to Wood, was an ingenious and well-bred gentleman, and a good but conceited poet.—*Athen. Oxon.* vol. iii. p. 1119. He was an active member of a political club to which Harrington belonged.

(g) 'The Commonwealth of Oceana,' by Harrington, appeared in 1656, and was another of those theories of government, which were gendered during the Commonwealth, and with which Baxter appears to have been greatly dissatisfied. It was written in imitation of the 'Atlantis' of Plato, and the 'Utopia' of Sir Thomas More; and, like both its celebrated prototypes, deserves to be viewed only as a political romance. It is constructed on the principles of pure republicanism, and was therefore not more acceptable to Cromwell, than afterwards to Charles. The author was one of the most active, restless spirits of the Commonwealth,—ingenious and visionary, but very harmless. He died in a state of insanity, having for some time before his death imagined that his perspiration was turned into flies and bees. The celebrated Tolland collected his works, to which he prefixed a Life. The 'Oceana' is worth the reading for its ingenuity and style.

(h) I suppose Baxter refers here to Vane's 'Healing Question,' in which he endeavors to adjust the points of government on democratical principles, combined with religion.

(i) Stubbs wrote an 'Essay in Defence of the Good Old Cause; or, a Discourse concerning the use and extent of the Power of the Civil Magistrate in Spiritual Affairs.' 1659. The preface to this work contains a defence of Vane; but he also wrote by itself 'A Vindication of that Prudent and Honorable Knight, Sir Henry Vane, from the Lies and Calumnies of Mr. Richard Baxter, in a Monitory Letter to the said Mr B.' 1659. This is the book to which I suppose Baxter alludes.

(k) John Rogers, the Fifth-Monarchy man, wrote 'Christian Concertation with Mr Prynne, Mr Baxter, and Mr Harrington, for the True Cause of the Commonwealth.' 1659. 4to. This is intended as an answer to Prynne's 'Anatomy of the Republic,' &c.; and to Baxter's 'Holy Commonwealth,' and part of his 'Key to Catholics.' Rogers was not destitute of parts and learning; but he was one of the most enthusiastic spirits of the excited age in which he lived.

(l) Marchmont Needham was one of the most celebrated political adventurers of the times. He was author of many of the 'Mercuries,' as they were called, which then flew about in all directions, and took all sides of the great political questions which agitated the country. He is said to have been 'transcendently gifted in opprobrious and treasonable droll,' which he did not scruple to employ on all occasions. Perhaps the pamphlet to which Baxter refers, as written by him, is his 'Discourse of the Excellency of a Free State above a Kingly Government' 1650.

(m) The book of Bagshaw's referred to is a Latin treatise 'De Monarchia Absolutâ Politica,' &c. 1659. 'The arguments in this discourse,' says Baxter, 'seem to be such poor, injudicious, slender stuff, that it was one occasion of my writing twenty arguments against Democracy, which I put into the book which I have since revoked, 'The Holy Commonwealth.'—*Baxter's Second Admonition to Bagshaw.*

by way of scorn he printed half a sheet of foolish jests, in such words as idiots or drunkards use, railing at ministers as a pack of fools and knaves; and by his gibberish derision persuading men that we deserve no other answer than such scorn and nonsense as beseemeth fools. With most insolent pride he carried it, as if neither I nor any ministers understood at all what policy was, but prated against we knew not what, and had presumed to speak against other men's art, which *he* was master of, and his knowledge, to such idiots as we, incomprehensible.[n] This made me think it fit, having given that general hint against his 'Oceana,' to give a more particular charge, and withal to give the world and him an account of my political principles, and to show what I held as well as what I denied; which I did in that book called 'Holy Commonwealth,' as contrary to his heathenish commonwealth. In which I pleaded the cause of monarchy as better than democracy and aristocracy; but as under God the universal monarch. Here Bishop Morley hath his matter of charge against me, of which one part is that I spake against unlimited monarchy, because God himself hath limited all monarchs. If I had said that laws limit monarchs, I might, amongst some men, be thought a traitor and inexcusable; but to say that God limiteth monarchs, I thought had never before been chargeable with treason, or opposed by any that believed that there is a God. If they are indeed unlimited in respect of God, we have many Gods or no God. But now it is dangerous to meddle with these matters, most men say, Let God defend himself.

"In the end of this book is an appendix concerning the cause of the parliament's first war, which was thus occasioned: Sir Francis Nethersole, a religious knight, who was against the lawfulness of the war on both sides, sent his man to me with letters to advise me to tell Cromwell of his usurpation, and to counsel him to call in the king; of which, when I had given him satisfaction, he sent him again with more letters and books to convince me of the unlawfulness of the parliament's war, and others attempting it at the same time, and the confusion, which the army had brought upon us, being such as made me very much disposed to think ill of those beginnings which had no better an end, I thought it best to publish my detestation and lamentation for those rebellious proceedings of the army; which I did as plainly as could be borne, both in an epistle to them, and in a meditation at the end. I withal declared the

(n) Baxter could scarcely expect any other treatment than he here describes from such men as Harrington. Politics was the element in which such men lived and breathed—the field which they considered their own. They regarded Baxter as leaving his proper business and meddling with theirs, when he wrote on government, and were therefore disposed to say in banter, "Ne sutor ultra crepidam," instead of reasoning with him.

very truth, that hereby I was made suspicious and doubtful of the beginnings or first cause, but yet was not able to answer the arguments which the lawyers of the Parliament then gave, and which had formerly inclined me to that side. I confessed that if men's miscarriages and ill accidents would warrant me to condemn the beginnings which were for another cause, then I should have condemned them ; but that not being the way, I found myself yet unable to answer the first reasons, and therefore laid them down together, desiring the help of others to answer them, professing my own suspicion, and my daily prayers to God for just satisfaction. And this paper is it that containeth all my crimes." (o)

Such is Baxter's own account of this work many years after its publication. Beside the preface and conclusion, it contains three hundred and eighty theses, or aphorisms, each of which is illustrated at more or less length: beginning with, "There are men inhabiting the earth," and ending with "A prudent godly prince is so rare, that the people who enjoy such, ought greatly to love, obey, and honor him." The space between these very evident points is filled up with a multitude of discussions, some more and others less interesting. On many of the subjects which he discusses, Baxter had enlightened views. He was the friend of civil liberty, and an enemy to despotism and arbitrary power. On both these subjects he occasionally wrote well. He seems also to have understood the great end and design of government to be, the good of the governed ; and describes more accurately than might have been expected, the nature of the British constitution. On the magistrates' power or authority in matters of religion, he was at fault, and writes like a person who imperfectly understood the subject. He would never have been a persecutor himself, but he saw no objection that men should be compelled to submit, for their own good, in what he regarded as lesser matters. This, however, is very dangerous ground to occupy.

The most obnoxious part of the book, at the time which followed its publication, is the conclusion, where he defends the doctrine of resistance to illegal and oppressive governments, and justifies the war on the part of the people of England against the king. The following passages states the principal grounds of his opinion, in which, whatever reproach he had to endure at the time, every friend of the British constitution now agrees with him.

"The laws in England are above the king: because they are not his acts alone, but the acts of king and parliament conjunctly, who have the legislative, that is, the sovereign power.

(o) Life, part i. pp. 118, 119.

This is confessed by the king in the answer to the nineteen propositions. The king was to execute judgment according to these laws, by his judges in his courts of justice: and his parliament was his highest court, where his personal will and word were not sufficient authority to suspend or cross the judgment of the court, except in some particular cases submitted to him. The people's rights were evidently invaded: ship-money and other impositions were without law, and so without authority. The new oath imposed by the convocation and the king, the ejecting and punishing ministers for not reading the Book of Sports on the Lord's-days, for not bowing towards the altar, for preaching lectures, and twice on the Lord's-day; with many the like, were without law, and so without authority.

"The parliament did remonstrate to the kingdom, the danger of the subversion of its religion and liberties, and of the common good and interest of the people, whose trustees they were: and we were obliged to believe them both as the most competent witnesses and judges, and the chosen trustees of our liberties. We are ourselves incapable of a full discovery of such dangers till it be too late to remedy them: and therefore the constitution of the government having made the parliament the trustees of our liberties, hath made them our eyes by which we must discern our dangers, or else they had been useless to us. The former proceedings afforded us so much experience as made the parliament's remonstrance credible. We saw the king raise forces against the parliament; having forsaken it, and first sought to seize upon its members in a way which he confessed a breach of its privilege. All the king's counsellors and soldiers were subjects, and legally under the power of the parliament. It had power to try any subject, and adjudge them to punishment for their crimes. The offenders whom it would have judged, fled from justice to the king and there defended themselves by force.

"When the parliament commanded us to obey them, and not resist them, I knew not how to resist and disobey them, without violation of the command of God, "Let every soul be subject to the higher power," &c.; and without incurring the danger of the condemnation there threatened to resisters. I think none doubts but that command obliged Christians to obey the senate as well as the emperor. When it was confessed by the king that the legislative power was in the three estates conjunct, and the estate was mixed, and consequently that the parliament had a part in the sovereignty, I thought it treason to resist them, as the enemy did, apparently, in order to their subversion; and unlawful to disobey their just commands, such as I thought these were.

"I had great reason to believe that if the king had con-

quered the parliament, the nation had lost all security of their liberties, and been at his mercy, and not merely under his government; and that if he had conquered them by such persons as he then employed, it had not been in his power to have preserved the commonwealth if he would. His impious and popish armies would have ruled him, and used him as other armies have done those that trusted them.

"I knew that the parliament was the representative body of the people of the commonwealth, who are the subject of the common good; that the common good is the essential end of government, and therefore that it cannot be a just war that, by their king, is made against them, except in certain excepted cases: and that the end being more excellent than the means, is to be preserved by us, and by no means to stand in competition with the end. And, therefore, if I had known that the parliament had been the beginners, and most in fault, yet the ruin of our trustees and representatives, and so of all the security of the nation, is a punishment greater than any fault of theirs against a king can deserve; and that their faults cannot disoblige me from defending the Commonwealth. I owned not all that ever they did; but I took it to be my duty to look to the main end. I knew that the king had all his power for the common good, and therefore that no cause can warrant him to make the commonwealth the party which he shall exercise hostility against. War against the parliament, especially by such an army, in such a cause, is hostility against them, and so against the commonwealth. All this seemed plain to me: and especially when I knew how things went before, and who were the agents, and how they were minded, and what were their purposes against the people."[p]

I doubt greatly whether, by any man of his own or of the present age, a clearer exposition could be given of the justifying causes of the civil war than these extracts furnish. They afford an admirable specimen of the clear view which Baxter had of the great question which so long distracted the country, and sufficiently account for his own conduct and that of many others in these painful transactions. While many circumstances compelled him to review the past, his mind never underwent any material change on those points. In the following passage, after having noticed the faults which had been committed on both sides, and some reasons of regret peculiar to himself, he avows his deliberate conviction of the righteousness of the cause, and declares what would be his future conduct under similar circumstances.

"I shall continue with self-suspicion to search, and be glad

(p) Holy Commonwealth, pp. 470, 472, 474, 477, 478, 480, 481.

of any information that may convince me if I have been mistaken; and make it my daily earnest prayer to God that he will not suffer me to live or die impenitently, or without the discovery of my sin, if I have sinned in this matter. Could I be convinced of it, I would as gladly make a public recantation as I would eat or drink; and I think I can say that I am truly willing to know the truth. But yet I cannot see that I was mistaken in the main cause, or dare repent of it, nor forbear the same, if it were to do again in the same state of things. I should do all I could to prevent such a war: but if it could not be prevented, I must take the same side as then I did. And my judgment tells me that if I should do otherwise, I should be guilty of treason or disloyalty against the sovereign power of the land, of perfidiousness to the commonwealth, of perferring offending subjects before the laws and justice, the will of the king above the safety of the commonwealth, and consequently above his own welfare; and that I should be guilty of giving up the land to blood, or to much worse, under pretence of avoiding blood in a necessary defence of all that is dear to us."[q]

'The Holy Commonwealth' was published at a very critical time, just as Richard Cromwell was falling, and before it appeared whether a republic or the old monarchy was to occupy his place. "It was written," the author tells us, "while the Lord Protector, prudently, piously, faithfully, to his immortal honor, did exercise the government." Unfortunately, with Richard fell the liberties of England for many a year; and the powers that came to be, took care to remember the alleged sins of Baxter committed in this work. It was often quoted against him, and its sentiments greatly misrepresented. Among others, it was attacked by Thomas Tomkins, a high-church clergyman, and a decided opposer of toleration and the privileges of the dissenters after the Restoration, in his 'Rebel's Plea examined; or, Mr. Baxter's Judgment concerning the late War.' 1660. 4to. Tomkins was the nephew of an old accquaintance of Baxter, a prebendary at Worcester, where he was a schoolboy when Baxter lived in the country. After writing this book he was created a doctor, and made chaplain to the Archbishop of Canterbury Baxter says, his 'Rebel's Plea' "was a confutation of such passages in his 'Holy Commonwealth,' as he least understood, and could make most odious."[r] This is not the only book which Tomkins wrote against the Nonconformists. He was author of 'The Inconveniences of Toleration; or the Modern Pleas of Toleration considered;' a book on which Baxter bestows some animadversions in his 'Apology for the Noncon-

(q) Holy Commonwealth, pp. 486, 487. (r) Life, part ii. p. 374.

formists, Ministry.' The author was in high esteem with Sheldon who made him rector of Lambeth, and conferred on him other preferments. [s]

Beside this direct attack, all the political adversaries of Baxter, such as Morley, [t] L'Estrange, Long, and others, took occasion to reproach him for the sentiments of this book. At last, in company with some of the writings of Owen, Locke, and other friends of British freedom, it was consigned to the fire by a decree of the University of Oxford. This reflected honor rather than disgrace on Baxter; and was in due time, as has been mentioned elsewhere, amply avenged on the time-serving body which thus dishonored itself.

Long before that time, however in consequence of the incessant attacks made upon him, [u] on account of this work, he published at the end of the preface to his 'Life of Faith,' printed in 1670, his regret for having published the book, and recalls it. The document is very curious, and failed to answer its purpose. The *scripta manet* was too powerful for Baxter's declaration of *non scriptum*. "Let the reader

(s) Athen. Oxon. vol. iii. p. 1047.

(t) Bishop Morley declares that it was on account of the sentiments avowed in the 'Holy Commonwealth' he refused to allow Baxter to preach in his diocese; and that he told him so when he waited on him to obtain permission to resume his labors at Kidderminster: which he alleges Baxter concealed. This does no credit to the bishop; and only shows how dangerous it then was for a man to preach the Gospel, or be a friend to the liberties of his country.—See the *Bishop of Winchester's Vindication.*

(u) One of the most furious attacks made on Baxter, in which the 'Holy Commonwealth' is referred to, was by a person of the name of Edward Pettit, M. A., in a work entitled 'Visions of Government,' published in 1684. After misrepresenting the principles, and calumniating the character, of Baxter, he puts into the mouth of Bradshaw,—whom he infamously represents as president of hell, bestowing the crown on Baxter, in a contest between him, Hobbes, and Neville, for pre-eminence,—the following invective: "If he, whose faith is faction, whose religion is rebellion, whose prayers are spells, whose piety is magic, whose purity is the gall of bitterness, who can cant and recant and cant again, who can transform himself into as many shapes as Lucifer, (who is never more a devil than when an angel of light, and like him, who, proud of his perfections, first rebelled in heaven,) proud of his imaginary graces, pretends to rule and govern, and consequently rebel on earth, be the greatest politician, then make room for Mr. Baxter. Let him come in and be crowned with wreaths of serpents, and chaplets of adders; let his triumphant chariot be a pulpit, drawn on the wheels of cannon by a brace of wolves in sheep's clothing; let the ancient fathers of the church, whom, out of ignorance, he has vilified; the reverend and learned prelates, whom, out of pride and malice, he has abused, belied, and persecuted; the most righteous king, whose murder, (I speak my own and his sense,) contrary to the light of all religion, laws, reason, and conscience, he has justified, then denied, then again and again and again justified; let them all be bound in chains to attend his infernal triumph to his 'Saint's Everlasting Rest;' then make room, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, Atheists, and politicians, for the greatest rebel on earth, and next to him that fell from heaven."—Of the author of this malignant production I can give no account. Beside his 'Visions of Government,' from which this extract is given, I have two other books of his, 'The Vision of Purgatory,' 1680, and 'The Visions of the Reformation,' 1683. They all discover marks of genius, though they leave it difficult to divine the true character of their author. In an engraved title to the 'Visions of Government,' Charles II. is represented trampling on a monster with three heads—the Grand Turk, the Pope, and a Presbyterian. The head of the Presbyterian is evidently intended for Richard Baxter!

know," he says, "that whereas the bookseller hath in the catalogue of my books, named my 'Holy Commonwealth, or Political Aphorisms,' I do hereby recall the said book and profess my repentance that ever I published it, and that not only for some bye-passages, but in respect of the secondary part of the very scope; though the first part of it, which is the defence of God and reason, I recant not. But this revocation I make with these provisoes: that I reverse not all the matter of the book, nor all that more than one have accused, as *e. g.* the assertion that all human powers are limited by God; and if I may not be pardoned for not defying Detiy and humanity, I shall prefer that ignominy before their present triumph and *fastus*, who defy them: [x]that I make not this recantation to the military fury and rebellious pride and tumult against which I wrote it, nor would have them hence take any encouragement for impenitence: that though I dislike the Roman clergy's writing so much of politics, and detest ministers meddling in state matters, without necessity or a certain call; yet I hold it not simply unbeseeming a divine, to expound the fifth commandment, nor to show the dependence of human powers on the divine, nor to instruct subjects to obey with judgment and for conscience' sake: that I protest against the judgment of posterity, and all others that were not of the same time and place, as to the mental censure either of the book or revocation, as being ignorant of the true reasons of them both. Which things provided, I hereby under my hand, as much as in me lieth, reverse the book, and desire the world to take it as *non scriptum*." [y]

The reasons which influenced him to take this singular step, he assigns very openly and candidly in the following passage of his Life: "Ever since the king came in, that book of mine was preached against before the king, spoken against in the parliament, and wrote against by such as desired my ruin. Morley, bishop of Worcester, and many after him, branded it with treason, and the king was still told that I would not retract it, but was still of the same mind, ready to raise another war: and a person not to be endured. New books every year came out against it; and even men that had been taken for sober and religious, when they had a mind for preferment, and to be taken notice of at court and by the prelates, did fall on preaching or

(x) In this passage Baxter alludes particularly to Bishop Morley, who vindicated himself from the charge of being "a defier of Deity and humanity." Had the bishop's notions of the divine character been more correct, and his political theology more accordant with the Bible, he would have been less known at court, and would not have gloried in depriving Richard Baxter of a license to preach the Gospel.

(y) Bishop Morley makes some very severe strictures on this recantation, as well as on the 'Holy Commonwealth' itself. He considers, with some justice, that the recantation is very equivocal, and affords little evidence that Baxter had changed his mind. To a man of his high-church principles it necessarily appeared very unsatisfactory.—See the *Conclusion of his Vindication*, pp. 1—15.

writing against me, and especially against this book, as the most probable means to accomplish their ends. When I had endured this ten years, and found no stop, but that still they proceeded to make me odious to the king and kingdom, and seeking my utter ruin this way, I thought it my duty to remove this stumbling-block out of their way, and without recanting any particular doctrine in it, to revoke the book and disown it, desiring the reader to take it as *non scriptum*, and telling him that I repented of the writing of it. And so I did, yet telling him that I retracted none of the doctrine of the first part, which was to prove the monarchy of God: but for the sake of the whole second part, I repented that I wrote it; for I was resolved, at least, to have this much to say against all that after wrote, and preached, and talked against it, that I had revoked that book, and therefore should not defend it. The incessant bloody malice of the reproachers made me heartily wish, on two or three accounts, that I had never written it; because it was done just at the fall of the government, and was buried in our ruins, and never that I know of did any great good; because I find it best for ministers to meddle, as little as may be, with matters of polity, how great soever their provocations may be: and therefore I wish that I had never written on any such subject. I repented also that I meddled against Vane and Harrington, which was the second part in defence of monarchy, seeing that the consequents had been no better, and that my reward had been to be silenced, imprisoned, turned out of all, and reproached implacably and incessantly as criminal, and never like to see an end of it. He that had wrote for so little, and so great displeasure, might be tempted, as well as I, to wish that he had sat still, and let God and man alone, with matters of civil polity. Though I was not convinced of many errors in that book, so called by some accusers, yet I repented the writing of it as an infelicity, and as that which did no good, but hurt." [z]

Various opinions will be entertained of this singular mode of recalling a printed work; and it may seem improper, in the face of Baxter's own protest against the judgment of posterity, respecting both the book and its revocation, to pronounce any opinion on the matter. But all such protests are vain; what is published is public property, and no man has a right, after publishing a book, to protest against others forming or expressing an opinion of it. It does not appear that Baxter ever changed his mind respecting the substance of the sentiments of his 'Holy Commonwealth,' but he regretted their publication, as he became thereby involved in disputes which were foreign from the nature of his principal occupation, and exposed himself to

(z) Life, part iii. pp. 71, 72.

reproach, which, as a minister of Christ, he would rather have avoided. It might, perhaps, have been better had the book not been published, but that being done, it is to be regretted he should have thus recalled it. It contains nothing of which he had any reason to be ashamed. The passages of it most objected to, are the parts which of all others are most creditable to the judgment and feelings of Baxter; and respecting which there is now scarcely any difference of opinion in this enlightened country. I will not, however, defend the political consistency of Baxter. In these passages, he avows principles and approves of conduct not reconcilable with his opposition to the doctrines of Hooker, on which I have remarked in another chapter. And, indeed, in the 'Holy Commonwealth' itself, there are positions that it would be impracticable to harmonize. Considering also what part he acted in connexion with the army of the commonwealth, and the defence which he makes of his own conduct, he ought to have been more sparing in his censures of others who, in these affairs, do not appear to have acted differently from himself, or to have been influenced in their conduct by motives less pure or patriotic.[a]

In 1680, Baxter published his 'Church History of the Goverment of Bishops, and their Councils Abbreviated.' This is a quarto volume of more than 500 pages, and, though chiefly a compilation, must have cost the author very considerable labor. It contains an account of the leading transactions of Christian princes and popes, and of the principal heresies and controversies till the Reformation. Its object is to inform the ignorant of the state of the ancient churches, and to correct many mistakes and misconceptions that prevail respecting the heresies of former times, and the means employed to destroy or promote them.

Ecclesiastical history is a very important branch of study, but one which is attended with many difficulties. The widely-spread and diversified circumstances of the Christian church, even from the earliest period, render it difficult to arrive at

(a) Baxter tells a curious anecdote respecting Dr. South in connexion with his 'Holy Commonwealth.' "Bishop Morley having preferred a young man named Mr. S—, orator of the University of Oxford, a fluent, witty, satirist, and one that was some time mentioned to me to be my curate at Kidderminster; this man, being household chaplain to the lord chancellor, was appointed to preach before the king, where the crowd had high expectations of some vehement satire. But when he had preached a quarter of an hour he was utterly at a loss, and so unable to recollect himself, that he could go no further, but cried 'The Lord be merciful to our infirmities,' and so came down. About a month after, they were resolved yet that Mr. S— should preach the same sermon before the king, and not lose his expected applause; and preach it he did, little more than half an hour, with no admiration at all of the hearers; and, for his encouragement the sermon was printed. When it was printed, many desired to see what words they were that he was stopped at the first time, and they found in the printed copy all that he had said first, and one of the next passages, which he was to have delivered, was against me for my 'Holy Commonwealth.'—*Life*, part ii. p. 380.

satisfactory views of many events in which it was concerned. Those events were seldom recorded at the time, or by the persons who lived on the spot. The early writers who undertook to give the history of the church, were not well skilled in the laws of historic truth and evidence, nor always well fitted to apply those laws. Opinions and statements scattered over the pages of the fathers and their successors, are often vague, discordant, and unsatisfactory, presenting almost endless perplexity or matter of debate. While these and other causes contribute to render ecclesiastical history very difficult, they who have devoted themselves to it in modern times, look at the subjects of their investigation through mediums which tend to color or distort most of the facts passing under their review. Their associations and habits of thinking lead them unconsciously to attach modern ideas to ancient terms and usages. The word church, for instance, almost invariably suggests the idea of a body allied to the state, and holding the orthodox creed. The heretics of church history are generally regarded as men of erroneous principles and immoral lives. Councils are bodies representative, and clothed with something approaching to infalliable authority. Bishops are not regarded as pastors of particular congregations, but ecclesiastical rulers of provinces. All these things tend greatly to bewilder and perplex an inquirer into the true state of the profession of Christianity during a long succession of ages; and from their distracting influence, even the strongest minds can scarcely be protected. Impartiality is commonly professed, and, in most instances, honestly intended, but very rarely exercised.

That Baxter should be altogether free from prejudice is not to be supposed. But as he held with none of the great leading parties of his own day on the subject of church government, he was as likely as most men to ascertain the truth; while total regardlessness of the influence which his discoveries or their promulgation might have upon his own circumstances, must have operated powerfully in securing an honest declaration of truth.[1]

His representation of the reason for undertaking this publication, and especially the testimony he bears respecting the chief causes of the evils and contentions which have afflicted the Christian church, are exceedingly important.

"I found by the people of London, that many, influenced by the late confusions in this land, had got an apprehension that all schism and disorder came from ministers and people re-

(1) In the introduction Baxter alludes to Dr. Heylin's unjust aspersions on the Presbyterians, and his seeming unconcern about the shedding of blood; which brought upon him a fierce rejoinder from Vernon, in his preface to Heylin's Life, with the repetition of the story of Baxter's killing a man, as the evidence of his bloody disposition; and some remarks on the church history.

sisting the bishops, and that prelacy is the means to cure schism; so that seeing what church tyranny hath done in the world, they fly to it for refuge against that mischief which it doth principally introduce. Wherefore I wrote the history of prelacy, or a contraction of all the history of the church, especially Binnius and Baronius, and others, of councils; to show by the testimony of their greatest flatterers what the councils and contentions of prelates have done. But the history, even as delivered by Binnius himself, was so ugly and frightful to me as the perusing, that I was afraid lest it should prove, when opened by me, a temptation to some to contemn Christianity itself for the sake and crimes of such a clergy. As an antidote, therefore, I prefixed the due commendation of the better, humble sort of pastors. But I must profess that the history of prelacy and councils, doth assure me that all the schisms and confusions that have been caused by Anabaptists, Separatists, or any of the popular, unruly sectaries, have been but as flea-bitings to the church in comparison of the wounds that prelatical usurpation, contention, and heresies, have caused. I am so far from wondering that all Baronius's industry was thought necessary to put the best visor on such actions, that I wonder the Papists have not rather employed all their wit, care, and power, to get the histories of councils burnt and forgotten in the world; that they might have only their own oral, flexible tradition to deliver to mankind; what their interest, *pro re nata*, shall require."[c]

The first part of the work, in which he gives an account of the primitive churches, showing most satisfactorily that they were single congregations under the government of their respective pastors or bishops; with the rise of diocesan episcopacy, and the progress of corruption, till Christianity became amalgamated with secular things and placed under the power of civil government, is the most important.

The views and reasonings contained in this portion of the work, are fully supported by the best authorities. I regret that my limits render it impracticable to make quotations: and to follow him through his account of popes and councils, would be unprofitable. As far as they are concerned, church history is little better than a record of human depravity and impiety under the name of religion. It is an almost unbroken exhibition of the lust and abuse of power—of irreligious arrogance and domination—of the worst passions of human nature, seeking their gratification, and displaying their most malignant qualities, in combination with a pretended regard to the interests of the pure and holy religion of Jesus.

(c) Life, part iii. pp. 181, 182.

This work of our indefatigable author did not pass without animadversion. It was attacked by a clergyman named Morrice or Maurice, chaplain to Archbishop Sancroft, in an anonymous work, entitled 'A Vindication of the Primitive Church Diocesan Episcopacy: in answer to Mr. Baxter's Church History, as also to some parts of his Treatise of Episcopacy.' 1682. 8vo. The great object of this work is to shake the authority of Baxter's statements, and to vindicate the bishops from what is laid to their charge. This led Baxter to write and publish his 'True History of Councils Enlarged and Defended.' 1682. 4to. This work is written with very considerable vigor and spirit, and is in some respects more interesting than the former. Baxter was stung and roused by some of the reproaches and misrepresentations of his adversary, and defends himself exceedingly well. He was accused of want of learning, and of want of accuracy; of misquoting and mistranslating his authorities. The following extract contains a piece of his own history, as well as a view of the extent of his reading, and of the authorities which he used; it is therefore curious:

"Seeing these things are thought just matter for our accuser's turn, I will crave the reader's patience while I tell him the truth. It is now about twenty-five years since I read the German history in the collections of Freherus, Reuberus, and Pistorius, and about thirty years since I read the collections of Goldastus. The Magdeburgers, Osiander, Sleidan, or any such Protestants, I thought vain to allege to Papists. About seven or eight years ago, I was accused for preaching, and fined by Sir Thomas Davis; and the warrant was sent by him to Sir Edmund Bury Godfrey, to levy it on me by distress. I had no way to avoid it, but *bonâ fide* to make away all that I had. Among the rest, I made away my library; only borrowing part of it for my use. I purposed to have given it almost all to Cambridge, in New England; but Mr. Thomas Knowles, who knew their library, told me that Sir Kenelme Digby had already given them the Fathers, Councils, and Schoolmen, and that it was history and commentators which they wanted. Whereupon I sent them some of my commantators, and some historians, among which were, Freherus', Reuberus', and Pistorius' collections; and Nauclerus, Sabellicus, Thuanus, Jos. Scaliger, &c. Goldastus I kept by me, (as borrowed,) and many more which I could not spare; the fathers, councils, and schoolmen, I was stopped from sending. Now, whether I was unacquainted with those that partly stand yet at my elbow, and which I had read so long ago, must depend on the credit of my memory; which, I confess, of late has grown weak: but not so weak as to think that Marquardus Freherus was not one man, and a Palatinate Councillor, though it be names that I most forget. Why

I gave not the christian names of Reuberus and Pistorius, whether because I forgot them, or because I minded not so small a thing, not dreaming what would be inferred from it, I remember not. But when I wrote that abridgment, I made use of none that I thought the Papists would except against. For the first ages, I gathered what I remembered out of the Fathers, and out of Eusebius, Socrates, Sozomen, Evagrius, Theodoret, the Tripartite, Nicephorus, Liberatus, Brev. Victor Vtic, Bede, and such others as are by them received. Beside which, I principally followed and epitomized Binnius and Crab, and partly Baronius, with Platina, Onuphrius, Panunius, Stella, Petavius, and others of their own. I resolved I would not so much as open Goldastus, or any Protestant collector, that they might not except against their credit, and reject them as malicious, cursed heretics. Therefore, even those histories which be in Goldastus, I would not take as out of him, but some of them from the books published by others, and some as cited by Binnius, Petavius, or other such: and this is now the proof of my vanity.

"He accuseth me for not using Valesius' edition of Eusebius, and those editions of the councils which he accounteth the best. To which I say, I am not rich enough to buy them, nor can keep them if I had them. Must none write but rich men? The French councils would cost more than many of us are worth. We have had no ecclesiastical maintenance these nineteen years, and we cannot keep the books we have.

"As for my using Hanmer's translation of Eusebius and Socrates, my case was as before described. Valesius I had not; Grynæus I made use of heretofore. But since I was, by constraint, deprived both of my books and money to buy more, when I wrote that abridgment, I had only Hanmer's translation left me: and if that sort of men who forced me to give away my books, to keep them from being distrained on, will make use, of this to prove me ignorant of them, the matter is very small to me.

"If you say I should not then have written, I answer, Could they so have silenced us in the pulpit, they had more answered their own judgment than mine. I had no use for critics, nor for any thing in Eusebius and Socrates that depends on the credit of the translator."

There is something very stinging in this and some other passages of the present work, as applied to the party by whom Baxter was chiefly opposed. His defence of himself against the other misrepresentations of this author, which refer both to his work and to himself, are, in general, very satisfactory, but do not require to be gone into.

(d) 'True History of Councils Defended,' pp. 56—59.

In the preface to this work, he gives some account of Job Ludolph's 'History of Ethiopia.' He then, in reply to L'Estrange, gives a specimen of the readiest method of confuting Mr. Baxter, by noticing the story of his killing a man, adding the true account of that affair, which has been given in the first part of these memoirs. Annexed to the work is an admirable anonymous pamphlet, by Mr. David Clarkson, 'Diocesan Churches not yet Discovered in Primitive Times; or, a Defence of the Answer to Dr. Stillingfleet.' Clarkson is well known as the colleague and successor of Dr. Owen. On this occasion, Baxter and he, though an Independent, wrote in conjunction. They were agreed on the main points in dispute, viz., that diocesan episcopacy was not the primitive form of church government, but a departure from it. Clarkson was a man of great piety and moderation, and of more accurate learning than Baxter, though far from equal to him in acuteness and controversial talents. [e]

Baxter also speaks, on his title-page, of a detection of the false history of Edward, Lord Bishop of Cork and Ross, in Ireland. He refers to a publication of Bishop Wetenhall's, entitled, 'The Protestant Peace-Maker,' published in 1682; in a postscript to which are some notes on several of Baxter's writings for peace. His lordship evidently did not understand the subject on which he wrote. His strictures are feeble, and undeserving of the attention which Baxter bestowed on them. The two works on church history, which we have now noticed, with the treatise on episcopacy, are among the best of Baxter's writings, which have not been re-published, and well deserve the attention of inquirers into the affairs of the church. [f]

The 'Breviat of the Life of Mrs. Margaret Baxter, with some account of her mother, Mrs. Hanmer,' was published shortly after Mrs. Baxter's death, in 1681. Of this little work considerable use has already been made, in noticing Baxter's marriage, and his wife's death. Of Mrs. Baxter it is unnecessary again to speak; she possessed great piety, energy,

(e) Wood (Athen. Oxon. vol. iv. p. 328) says Clarkson afterwards disowned this book, though on what authority he does not say. He afterwards published a very admirable tract, 'Primitive Episcopacy stated and cleared from the Holy Scriptures and Ancient Records.' 1688. 8vo. To this work Maurice, then a Dr., published an answer, in a 'Defence of Diocesan Episcopacy.' 1691. 8vo. Dr. Maurice was a person of very considerable learning, of which he seems sufficiently sensible in his controversy with Baxter.

(f) There is one fact mentioned in his 'True History of Councils Defended,' which ought to be mentioned. It throws some light on the charge of persecuting the Episcopalians, preferred against Cromwell and his party. "In the days of the usurpers I moved for a petition, that, when they granted liberty of conscience to so many others, they would grant liberty for the full exercise of the Episcopal government to all that deserved it. *But the Episcopal party that I spake to would not endure it, as knowing what bare liberty would be to their cause, unless they could have the sword to suppress those that yield not to their reasons.*' p. 131.

and benevolence, and was peculiarly fitted to be the wife of such a man. His account of her is full of affection, very minute, and very faithful; as it records some of her failings, as well as her virtues. It is strikingly characteristic of the author. He mentions in the preface, that in his wife's will he was particularly requested to re-print five hundred copies of the funeral sermon for her mother, written in 1661, which leads him to give some account of his writing the biographical sketch of his wife and of some other individuals of his family.

"Being thus obliged, by her request, mine own affections urged me to premise this Breviat of her own Life; written, I confess, under the power of melting grief, and therefore perhaps with the less prudent judgment; but not with the less, but the more truth, for passionate weakness poureth out all, which greater prudence may conceal. Conscionable men's histories are true, but if they be also wise, they tell us but some part of truth; concealing that which would do harm, and which the depraved world cannot bear without abusing it. But we that are less wise tell all the truth, too little regarding how men will receive it.

"And hence comes all history, which hath not evidence equal to natural, to be of less credit than most men think; while bad men lie, and good men leave out so much of the truth, as makes the rest to be as another thing than altogether it would appear.

"And having purposed to write this breviat concerning my dear wife, God having, the same year, taken away two more of my ancient family, I wrote a breviat of their lives also. One was my excellent, holy mother-in-law, Mary the daughter of Sir Thomas Hunks, widow to my dear father. She was one of the most humble, mortified, holy persons that ever I knew; and lived in longing to be with Christ, till she was a hundred years old, wanting three or four, in full understanding, and at last rejoicing in the triumphant, frequent hearing, and repeating the ninety-first Psalm.

"The other was my old friend and housekeeper, Jane Matthews, who lived in pious, humble virginity, with eminent worth to about seventy-six or seven-seven years, and died of mere decay, without considerable pain or sickness, about a month or six weeks before my wife.

"To these I add a fourth, a breviat of the life and death of the worthy mother of my wife, as to the time that I knew her. But I have cast by these latter three, and much of the first, by the counsel of wise friends, as things which they think that strangers will not make so great a matter of, as love and nearness made me do.

"As to these little private histories of mine own family forementioned, I was loth to cast by my own mother-in-law's

life, she being a person of extraordinary holiness, living long with Sir Robert Harley, whose lady was her cousin-german; afterwards at Shrewsbury, and after with my father and me, &c., in so great communion with God, contempt of the world, and all its pomp and vanity; so great victory over the flesh, and so strong desires to die; and especially in such constant, fervent, successful prayer, that had marvellous answers, as very few Christians attain.

"She is gone after many of my choicest friends, who within one year are gone to Christ, and I am following even at the door. Had I been to enjoy them only here, it would have been but a short comfort mixed with the many troubles which all our failings and sins, and some degree of unsuitableness between the nearest and dearest, cause. But I am going after them to that blessed society, where life, light, and love, and therefore harmony, concord, and joy, are perfect and everlasting."

To the Memoir of Mrs. Baxter itself, after the extracts already given, I shall not any further advert. It as an interesting testimony to the character of a beloved and excellent woman, who enjoyed the highest confidence of this man of God, and who devoted herself to promote his comfort and usefulness to the end of life. He had intended to make his account of her, and of all the circumstances connected with their marriage, much more extended; but was diverted from his purpose by the advice of some judicious friends. His papers on this subject have I suppose been destroyed, which I do not much regret; though they would have gratified curiosity, they might not answer any useful purpose.

Among the historical and biographical writings of Baxter, may be properly classed his 'Penitent Confession, and necessary Vindication.' 1691. 4to. This must have been among the latest of his productions, as a letter prefixed to it, addressed to Bishop Stillingfleet, is dated June 13, 1691. Few men have been subjected to greater or more calumnious misrepresentations than Baxter. To these he was particularly exposed, not only from the public part which he acted, and from his sentiments as a Nonconformist, during a period of great difficulty, but from the promptitude and honesty with which he always avowed and published his convictions, respecting both himself and others. He was a great lover of peace and of his friends; yet he had a still stronger love for truth and the interests of religion. The man who could fearlessly sacrifice himself to what he believed the cause of righteousness required, was not likely to be fastidiously cautious in speaking of the conduct of others, whether friends or foes.

Among his bitterest and most persevering enemies, was one Long, a clergyman of Exeter, who appears to have considered

it his duty to hunt down the Nonconformists in general, and Baxter above all others. According to Wood—"He was a person well read in the fathers', in Jewish, and other ancient writings; and much conversant with the works of the more modern authors, as having been well skilled in the writings of the several sorts of English separatists, especially of the Presbyterians. The great danger and destructiveness of their rebellious principles and practices (reducing them into faithful historical narratives from their first origin and source quite down to these times) few, if any, have fully and truly represented in their proper colors, fairly examined, or more clearly refuted and set out. He hath also undergone that very toilsome drudgery of reading many or most of Mr. Richard Baxter's books, and hath published reflections and animadversions on several of them." [g]

This violent individual, after attacking several of Baxter's controversial pieces, to which reference is elsewhere made, vented his full malignity in an anonymous volume, imputed to him by Baxter, and which he afterwards acknowledged. 'The Unreasonableness of Separation, the second part; or, a further impartial Account of the History, Nature, and Pleas of the present Separation from the Church of England, with special Remarks on the Life and Actions of Mr. Richard Baxter.' 1681. 8vo. The zeal and labor employed in getting up this book are quite extraordinary, in order to show that Baxter was a bad man, and a great heretic. His life and writings must have been ransacked in the most assiduous manner, to furnish the mis-statements and mis-representations with which the book abounds. To investigate their nature, and expose their injustice, would fill up a volume. Happily, it is not necessary to the just and fair reputation of Baxter; that has outlived the abuse and the very memory of Long; who is now known only to the curious in the history of those times as the calumniator of Owen and Baxter, the defender of High-Church principles in religion, and of passive obedience in politics. That he was a man not altogether destitute of talents, evident even from his mischievous books; but talents, however great, when prostituted to evil purposes, and employed in opposing or vilifying men of principle and integrity, ultimately bring upon their possessor the displeasure of God, and the indignation of men. [h]

(g) Athen. Oxon. vol. iv. p. 485.

(h) The only part of Long's book which it is worth while to quote, is the conclusion, which he calls a characteristic epitaph of Baxter. It will illustrate, better than any thing I could say, Long's vituperative character:—

Hic jacet Richardus Baxter,
Theologus Armatus,
Loiolita Reformatus,
Hæresiarcha Ærianus,
Schismaticorum Antisignanus:

Baxter wrote an answer to this scurrilous production at the time; but delayed its publication till he received in 1691 an anonymous letter, signed "*Cantianus De Minimis*," calling him to repent and to publish his Confessions like Augustine. Baxter printed this letter at the end of one prefixed to his Confession, addressed to Stillingfleet, and thanks the writer, though unknown to him, for giving him the opportunity of professing his repentance. The greater part of the letter would demand to be quoted, did the limits of this work admit of it, as illustrative of the spirit of Baxter, and explanatory of his designs in writing his Confession.

After this excellent prefatory letter, he proceeds to give some account of the necessity of repentance, and of the things for which others blamed him, but for which he did not blame himself. He then reviews many particulars in his life and writings, defending, extenuating, explaining, or retracting, as matters seemed to require. As the statements, in connexion with his own life, have been often used in this work, this pamphlet requires no further notice. It is a singular evidence of the integrity, tenderness of conscience, and regardlessness of the applause or censure of men, for which Baxter was so remarkable.

Cujus pruritus disputandi peperit,
Scriptitandi cacoethes nutrivit,
Predicandi zelus intemperatus maturavit,
ECCLESIÆ SCABIEM:
Qui dissentit ab iis quibuscum consentit maximè;
Tum sibi cum aliis Nonconformis,
Præteritis, præsentibus, et futuris;
Regum et Episcoporum Juratus hostis,
Ipsumq: Rebellium solenne fœdus;
Qui natus erat, per septuaginta Annos
Et Octoginta Libros,
Ad perturbandas Regni Respublicas,
Et ad bis perdendam Ecclesiam *Anglicanam;*
Magnis tamen excidit ausis:
Deo Gratias.

The following is a translation of this effusion of malice and wickedness;—

Here lies Richard Baxter, a militant divine, a reformed Jesuit, a brasen heresiarch, and chief of the schismatics: whose itch of disputing begat, whose humor of writing nourished, and whose intemperate zeal in preaching brought to its utmost height, the leprosy of the church: who dissented from those with whom he most agreed, from himself as well as from all other Nonconformists, past, present, and to come; the sworn enemy of kings and bishops, and in himself the very bond of rebels; who was born, through seventy years and eighty books, to disturb the peace of the kingdom, and twice to attempt the ruin of the Church of England; in the endeavor of which mighty mischiefs he fell short. Thanks be to God.

It was the fashion to write epitaphs for Baxter: another scurrilous enemy proposed to write over his tomb the two lines which are mangled in the last part of the above—

'Hic situs est BAXTER, currus auriga paterni,
Quem si non tenuit, magnis tamen excidit ausis.'

—*Young's Anti-Baxterianæ.*

The above quotations justify the remark of Granger, 'Baxter's enemies have placed him in hell;' that candid and spirited writer, however, justly adds, 'but every man that has not ten times the bigotry that Baxter himself had, must conclude that he is in a better place.'—*Biog. Hist.* vol. v. p. 81.

The last work in this department remaining to be noticed is the largest, and, at the same time, the most important of all. 'Reliquiæ Baxterianæ: Mr. Richard Baxter's Narrative of the most memorable passages of his Life and Times, faithfully published from his own original manuscript, by the Rev. Matthew Sylvester.' fol. 1686. Of a work, the most valuable parts of which have been incorporated in this volume, the reader will not expect to be furnished with a detailed description in this place. A few particulars, however, are necessary to be stated.

It contains an account of Baxter, from his birth, in 1615, to the year 1684; including his personal transactions, or private life, his ministerial life, and his views of the great public affairs of his times. It is divided into three parts: the first extending from his birth to the time of the Commonwealth; and including some occurrences which happened afterwards. The second goes back to the Westminster Assembly, and to the civil wars, and concludes with the year 1665, at the time of the plague in London. The third, which he began to write in 1670, takes up the narrative where it had broken off, and brings it down to about 1684. There is also a large appendix of papers and letters of various degrees of interest.

Considered as an account of Baxter and his times, it is an invaluable document; but it is exceedingly to be regretted that it fell into the hands of so incompetent an editor as Sylvester. He was a very good man, but utterly unfit for the task which was devolved upon him. Instead of digesting the materials which Baxter had left in the roughest state, he appears to have printed them with all their imperfections, and with scarcely any regard to arrangement. The consequence is, the book is almost unreadable, except for the purpose of consultation; and even that is attended with much difficulty from its disorderly disposition. It is also printed with remarkable inaccuracy, either from the editor or the printer, in numberless places, grossly mistaking the author's meaning, or leaving it unitelligible. The following paragraph from Sylvester's preface, sufficiently justifies what I have now stated.

"As to the author's ordering and digesting of his own memoirs a rhapsody it now appears; and as to method and equality of style, somewhat below what curious readers might expect: yea, and from what it had been, had it but passed the author's stricter thoughts and view. Yet we shall find the history greatly useful, though not exactly uniform; nor is it so confused as to be incapable of easy references, and reductions to such proper order as may best please the reader, if the design be clear and worthy, viz., to set in open light the degenerate age he lived in; the *magnalia* of grace and providence as to himself; his self-censurings on all occasions; caution and conduct unto others;

and tracing all events to their genuine sources and originals. The judicious reader will improve such things. There were several papers loosely laid, which could not easily be found when needed. And the defectiveness of my very much declining memory made me forget, and the more because of haste and business, where I had laid them after I had found them. Some few papers mentioned, and important here, are not yet found, though searched after, which yet, hereafter, may be brought to light amongst some others intended for the public view, if God permit. The reverend author wrote them at several times, as his other work and studies and frequent infirmities would admit of. He was more intent upon the matter than the method; and finding his evening shadows growing long, as the presage of his own approaching and expected change, he was willing, through the importunity had, rather that the work was done somewhat imperfectly, than not at all. It is true, indeed, that he hath left us nothing of the last seven years of his life, save his apology for his accused 'Paraphrase and Notes on the New Testament;' for which he was so fiercely prosecuted, imprisoned, traduced, and fined. And though some pressed me to draw up the supplemental history of his life, yet the wisest that I could consult advised me to the contrary; and I did take their counsel to be right and good."

The chief value of this work consists in the faithful portrait which it presents of the excellent and venerable author. It exhibits him at full length, displaying all his greatness, his weaknesses, and his peculiarities. It enables us to live with Baxter, and in Baxter's times. It opens his heart, and enables us to read, without disguise, what was passing there. It opens his chamber door, and discloses the retirement and the privacies of the man of God—holding fellowship with his Maker and Redeemer—mourning over his deficiencies and sins—wrestling in prayer, and rejoicing in hope. It conducts us to his pulpit, and places us almost within reach of the lightning of his eye, and the music of his voice—arresting attention, flashing conviction, penetrating with sorrow, or filling with peace and joy. It introduces us to his flock, and makes us familiar with his pastoral visits, his catechetical labors, his faithful discipline. It places him before us as the centre of an extended circle of correspondents, who looked to him for counsel to guide, for encouragement to act, for comfort to suffer—vigilant, tender, and conscientious. It exhibits him as the patriot, alive to all the wrongs of his country, and endeavoring to redress or mitigate them; ambitious, not of ease, honor, or preferment; and regardless of all personal interests, if he might but promote the public good. It depicts him as the steady and devoted witness and confessor of Christ; enduring wrongfully for his

Master's sake, with all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness. It is such a book as cannot be read without the deepest interest by all who have any respect for Baxter, for the class of persons to which he belonged, or for the period in which he lived.

Baxter's account of public occurrences, in some of the most important of which he was not merely personally but deeply engaged, must be received with allowance for those mistakes to which the most candid and upright men are liable; and for those prejudices of party and of system, from which it is obvious Baxter was not exempted. Wherever he records what he said or did, or what occurred under his own eye, the fullest dependence may be placed upon his statements. His reasonings on facts may frequently be liable to objection; and when he speaks of the conduct and principles of others, on the ground of what he heard, we must examine what he says by the established laws of evidence. The period of which he treats did not belong to the ordinary course of the world. There was nothing common-place in its features. Politics, religion, law, government, all assumed new and strange characters. All classes of men were thrown out of their accustomed circumstances and relations, and assumed forms and habits, novel and strange. It was impossible to think, speak, or write, but as partizans. Hence, the difficulty in arriving at true and accurate views of many of the individuals and affairs of those times. Baxter affords important aid; but implicit confidence must not always be placed in his judgment, or in the reports which he received from others. I have introduced every thing important in his narrative, in his own language, making the required verbal and grammatical corrections; but I have frequently corrected his statements and disputed his reasonings in the notes. Justice to Baxter required that I should faithfully record his views; justice to truth, and to the light with which we are now furnished, required that I should not suppress my own.

Dr. Calamy has left us, in 'His Own Life,' the following account of this publication, which shows, that had it been under his care, it would have appeared in a more improved form. "This work," he says, "was much expected, and had been long earnestly desired. Mr. Baxter left it, with his other MSS., to the care of his beloved friend, Mr. Sylvester, who was chary of it to the last degree, and not very forward to let it be seen; yet had not leisure enough to peruse and publish it. After some time, I obtained the favor of the MS., and read it over and discoursed with him about the contents with all imaginable freedom. I found the good man counted it a sort of sacred thing to have any hand in making alterations of any sort, in

which I could not but apprehend he went too far, and was cramped by a sort of superstition.

"Of this I was the more fully convinced upon my seeing several passages in the MS. that I could perceive likely to do more hurt than good; and being informed, upon inquiry made, that he had a discretionary power left him by his deceased friend, I freely told him some things must be left out, or he would be charged with great weakness. He asked for instances; and I began with Mr. Sylvester's own character, and told him I could not see how he could, with decency, let that stand, though it was an instance of the author's kindness to him, when he himself was to be the publisher. He seemed surprised and struck, and upon my turning to it and reading it to him, owned that that should be altered, and empowered me to do it. I further mentioned to him some few reflections on persons and families of distinction, which would be offensive, though the matters related were true enough. These, also, he suffered me to blot out. I then fastened on some other things relating to Mr. Baxter himself, about a dream of his, and his bodily disorders and physical management of himself, and some other things that were too mean, the publishing of which I told him to censure. After a great deal of discourse, he suffered these also to be expunged. The contents prefixed to Mr. Baxter's narrative, and the index at the end, were of my drawing up. For my pains, I had from the booksellers the present of a copy."[i]

Notwithstanding the remarks of Dr. Calamy, Sylvester brought out the Life in a most unfinished state; and full of the sort of gossip, and tiresome digressions, which he had been entreated to omit. Even the index drawn up by Calamy, reflects little credit on his skill or industry; being not more correct or complete than the work itself.

Of this work, Calamy justly observes, "It met with the same treatment, as Baxter in his lifetime was much used to, both as to his person and his writings. It has been valued by some, and as much slighted by others. But where it has been most freely censured, it has been generally acknowledged to contain a collection of many valuable things of divers kinds."[k] It was first attacked by Baxter's indefatigable adversary, Long; who published, in 1697, 'A Review of Mr. Richard Baxter's Life; wherein many mistakes are rectified, some false relations detected, some omissions supplied, out of his other books; with remarks on several material passages.' 8vo. This volume is in fact only a repetition of the 'Second Part of the Unreasonableness of Separation,' published by Long, in 1682, with additions

(i) Calamy, vol. i. pp. 376—380.

(k) Pref. to Calamy's Abridg.

of the same malignant nature. Of this man of violence and war, enough has already been said. Baxter's account of his former attack upon him is justly applicable to the present. His object is not to correct the mistakes or errors of Baxter, but to prove him to have been a liar, and a villain, and that the men of his party were generally no better. It is unnecessary to vindicate Richard Baxter from such charges of the Rev. Thomas Long, prebendary of Exeter.

The work was attacked with no less virulence and malignity by a person named Young, who, Calamy says, came from Plymouth. He entitles his small Grub-street libel, 'Anti-Baxterianæ: or Animadversions on a book entitled Reliquiæ Baxterianæ.' 1696. 12mo. It is difficult to divine the motive or object of this worthless performance; the author of which seems to have been crazed as well as wicked. He talks all sorts of nonsense and ribaldry; speaking sometimes as a churchman, and sometimes as a dissenter: so that no correct opinion can be formed, either of his sentiments or designs, from this publication.

Dr. Calamy published in 1705, 'An Abridgment of Mr. Baxter's History of his Life and Times. This work appeared at first in one volume, 8vo; but in 1713, the author re-published it in two volumes, with a continuance of the history of the Dissenters till 1711, and an account of the ejected ministers. In 1727, he published 'A Continuation of the Account of the ejected Minister;' so that the complete work makes four considerable volumes. As an abridgement of Baxter it is very faithful, but dull; because it is a continued translation of Baxter's own narrative from the first to the third person: thus destroying the charm of the finest of Baxter's personal descriptions, and necessarily fettering the style of Calamy throughout. The entire work, however, is replete with valuable, and in general, accurate information respecting the character, principles, and sufferings, of the Nonconformists.

"This work," the author says, "cost me no little pains, and was more taken notice of in the world, and got me more friends and enemies too, than I could have expected or imagined. I had the thanks of several in the established church, as well as of a great number out of it. Many also were displeased, and some went so far as to threaten my abridgement with the public censure of the convocation. A dignified clergyman discoursing to that purpose with one of my booksellers, that had a concern in the work, and telling him what he had heard from several, that there was a design of that nature on foot, the bookseller requested him to be so kind as to tell any members of the convocation, that if they would pursue that design, and bring it to bear, he would willingly present such as were active in it with

a purse of guineas, and did not doubt but the consequence would turn to good account to him in the way of business. This being reported, there was no more talk heard of that nature.

"Among other censures, Dr. William Nichols, some time after publishing a Latin defence of the doctrine and discipline of the Church of England, charges me in his historical Apparatus, 'with hard and severe reflections running through my work.'"[1]

As a counterpart and counteraction to Baxter and Calamy, John Walker, a clergyman of Exeter, published in a folio volume, 'An Attempt towards recovering an Account of the Numbers and Sufferings of the Clergy of the Church of England, Heads of Colleges, Fellows, Scholars, &c., who were sequestered, harassed, &c., in the late time of the grand Rebellion; occasioned by the ninth chapter, now the second volume, of Dr. Calamy's Abridgment,' &c. 1714.

It is impossible to deny that many of the clergy suffered severely during the civil wars, which no doubt involved many worthy individuals and families in undeserved as well as severe distress. Walker, it is evident, bestowed great pains to represent their hardships. But his attempt falls far short of the book to which it was intended as a reply. It is exceedingly incorrect in the statement of numbers, in the representation of many occurrences, and in general is deficient in historic fidelity. It cannot be referred to as a book of authority.

"My work," says Calamy, "was also warmly reflected on in a pamphlet, entitled, 'A Case of present Concern in a Letter to a Member of the House of Commons, in Mr. Wesley's defence of his letter concerning the education of Dissenters in their private academies; in a sermon of Mr. Stubbs, entitled, 'For God or for Baal, or no Neutrality in Religion;' and in almost all the warm and angry pamphlets which at that time swarmed from the press in great plenty. 'Animadversions' were published upon me in a dialogue; my Abridgement was said to 'deserve to be condemned by public authority, and to undergo the fiery trial; and there came out a rebuke to Mr. Edmund Calamy, author of the Abridgement of Mr. Baxter's Life by Thomas Long, B. D. But he was a man of such a temper, and the spirit that ran through his writings was so bitter, and had such a mixture of weakness with fury, that it seemed to little purpose to offer at pursuing the argument, and therefore I forbore." [m]

In the tenth chapter of his Abridgement, Calamy reduces to

(l) Dr. Nichols' work was replied to by Mr. Peirce of Exeter, in his 'Vindication of the Dissenters.' Both Nichols and Peirce published first in Latin; but their works afterwards appeared in English. Those who are disinclined to read larger publications, will find in these two volumes the substance of the controversy between the Church and the Nonconformists.

(m) Calamy's own Life, vol. i. pp. 445—449.

distinct heads the reasons of the Nonconformists for separating from the church of England. This part of the work is written with great care and judgment, and was considered at the time one of the ablest defences of the Nonconformists which had appeared. It was therefore attacked by the Rev. Thomas Ollyffe, rector of Durton and Hedgerly, in his 'Defence of Ministerial Conformity,' which came out in three parts in the years 1703, 1705, and 1706. The celebrated Dr. Hoadly, afterwards bishop of Bangor, also entered the lists with Calamy in 'The Reasonableness of Conformity to the Church of England;' which appeared in two parts, and went through several editions. In reply to both these antagonists, Calamy published in three successive parts, occupying as many volumes, his 'Defence of Moderate Nonconformity.' 1703-4-5. The controversy was managed with great ability on both sides, and affords by far the fullest view of the points in debate between the Church and the Nonconformists to be found in our language. [n]

CHAPTER XII.

DEVOTIONAL WORKS.

Introductory Observations—'The Saint's Everlasting Rest'—Written for his own use in the time of Sickness—Composed in Six Months—Notices of Brook, Pym, and Hampden, whose names are omitted in the latter Editions—Description, Character, and Usefulness of the Work—Attacked by Firmin—Baxter's 'Answer to his Exceptions'—'The Divine Life'—Occasioned by a request of the Countess of Balcarras—Its Object and Excellence—'Funeral Sermons' for various Persons—'Treatise of Death'—'Dying Thoughts'—'Reformed Liturgy'—'Paraphrase on the New Testament'—'Monthly Preparations for the Communion' 'Poetical Fragments'—'Additions' to the Fragments—'Paraphrase of the Psalms'—General Review of his Poetry—Conclusion.

The talents of Baxter as a writer appear in great advantage in every department in which they were employed. As a controversialist, he had not only no superior, but no equal in his day. In the field of theological warfare he was a giant, and few individuals who attempted to grapple with him, had reason to be proud of their success. In the practical instruction of religion he was not less distinguished. His knowledge of the word of God, and of the corrupt workings of the human heart, was profound; while his power over the minds and the affections of

(n) It called forth the commendation of John Locke, who declared that while the author "stood to the principles there laid down, he had no occasion to be afraid of any antagonist."—*Calamy's Own Life*, vol. ii. p. 31.

others, has been evinced by the numbers who have derived the highest benefit from his preaching and his writings. It is an extraordinary circumstance that, amidst the multiplicity of his labors, and the variety of his controversial discussions, he was enabled to preserve uninjured, during a long period of years, a more elevated tone of devotional feeling than has usually been enjoyed by Christians, even in the most favored walks of life. This will appear in the following review, which commences with the first and most popular of his works, and closes with almost the last production of his pen.

'The Saint's Everlasting Rest,'[o] though the second book which Baxter published, was the first he wrote; and had he never written another, it alone would have endeared his memory forever, to all who cherish the sublime hopes of the Gospel. "It was written by the author for his own use during the time of his languishing, when God took him off from all public employment;" and furnishes an admirable illustration of the richness and vigor of his mind, as well as of the great sources of its consolation. "While I was in health," he says, "I had not the least thought of writing books, or of serving God in any more public way than preaching; but when I was weakened with great bleeding, and left solitary in my chamber at Sir John Cook's in Derbyshire, without any acquaintance but my servant about me, and was sentenced to death by the physicians, I began to contemplate more seriously on the everlasting rest, which I apprehended myself to be just on the borders of. That my thoughts might not too much scatter in my meditation, I began to write something on that subject, intending but the quantity of a sermon or two; but being continued long in weakness, where I had no books and no better employment, I followed it on, till it was enlarged to the bulk in which it is published. The first three weeks I spent on it was at Mr. Nowel's house, at Kirkby Mallory, in Leicestershire; a quarter of a year more, at the seasons which so great weakness would allow, I bestowed on it at Sir Thomas Rous's in Worcestershire; and I finished it shortly after at Kidderminster."[p]

Thus, in less than six months, and those months of pain and sickness, he produced a quarto volume of more than eight hundred pages, rich in Christian sentiment, wonderfully correct and pointed in style, and fertile in most beautiful illustrations. "The marginal citations," he tells us, "I put in after I came home to my books, but almost all the book itself was written when I had no book but a Bible and a Concordance; and I found that the transcript of the heart hath the greatest force on the hearts of others."

(o) Works, vols. xxii. xxiii. (p) Life, p. 108.

The success and approbation which this work experienced, were very great. This first edition was published in 1649; the ninth edition, now before me, appeared in 1662, and it passed through several other editions in 4to. in the course of the few following years.

To each of the four parts into which the work is divided, dedications are prefixed. The whole is dedicated to the people of Kidderminster; the first part to Sir Thomas and Lady Jane Rous; and the three following to the people of Bridgnorth, Coventry, and Shrewsbury. The first three are addressed to those who had enjoyed his stated or occasional labors; the last is "a testimony of his love to his native soil, and to his many godly and faithful friends there living." All these addresses contain many faithful admonitions and warnings, much calculated to impress the minds of those with whom he had associated.[q]

Considerable alterations were made in the latter editions of the Rest. The most singular of these, is his omitting the names of Brook, Hampden, and Pym, as among those whom he rejoiced to have the prospect of meeting in heaven! It certainly would have been better either not to have introduced them at all, or to have allowed their names to remain. It looks like blotting them out of the book of life. The expectation that this would please the enemies of Puritanism, failed to be realized; while the author, at the same time, did violence to his own feelings, as his judgment of the individuals whose names he erased remained the same. "The need," he says, "which I perceived of taking away from before such men as Dr. Jane, any thing which they might stumble at, made me blot out the names of Lord Brook, Pym, and Hampden, in all the impressions of the book that were made since 1659: yet this did not satisfy. But I must tell the reader, that I did it not as changing my judgment of the persons, well known to the world: of whom Mr. John Hampden was one, whom friends and enemies acknowledge to be most eminent for prudence, piety, and peaceable counsels; having the most universal praise of any gentleman that I remember of that age."[r] This testimony to the Christian character of Hampden is particularly important, as Baxter appears to have been very intimate with him. His patriotism will not be reckoned the less worthy of estimation, when it is ascertained to have been of Christian origin and growth.

Though Baxter says nothing particular of Brook and Pym, it may not be unacceptable to the reader to be furnished with their

(q) These dedications, with the exception of the first to the people of Kidderminster, and that to Sir Thomas and Lady Rous, do not exist in the first edition. They appear to have been added afterwards.

(r) Life, part iii. 177.

character. Robert Greville, Lord Brook, was distinguished for his patriotism, his love of liberty, and his ardent piety. He and Lord Say had fully determined to go to America, on account of the civil and religious oppressions of Charles I.; and though he never left England, one of the early settlements was named Saybrook, after the two noblemen. He was a leading man in the Long Parliament, one of the commanders in its army; and was killed by a musket shot in the eye, at the storming of a close in Lichfield, in 1643. [s]

Lord Brook was an author as well as a soldier, and signalized himself in 'A Discourse, opening the Nature of that Episcopacy which is exercised in England.' 1641. 4to. This tract discovers a considerable portion of acuteness, and a respectable degree of acquaintance with the argument both from Scripture and antiquity. The piety and liberality of the writer are also very strongly marked. The conclusion of it is worth quoting. "To this end, God assisting me, my desire, prayer, endeavor, shall still be to follow peace and holiness. And though there may haply be some little dissent between my poor judgment and weak conscience, and other good men who are most clear and strong; yet my prayer shall still be to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. And as many as walk after this rule, peace, I hope, shall still be on them, and the whole Israel of God." [t] Yet Brook was a sectary and fanatic! He wrote another book, 'The Union of the Soul and Truth,' which I have not seen.

For the character of John Pym, who died about the same time with Lord Brook, it is enough to refer to Neal. [u] He was an admirable speaker, a man of profound knowledge and experience in business, and no less respected for his private worth and piety than for his public talents. He was carried from his own house to Westminster on the shoulders of the chief men of the House of Commons, the whole House going in procession before him, preceded by the assembly of divines. Marshall delivered a most eloquent and pertinent funeral sermon on the occasion. Parliament ordered his debts to be paid, and a stately monument to be built for him in the chapel of Henry VII. [x]

Such were the men whose names Baxter was induced, from the clamor raised against them, to erase from the book in which they had been honorably mentioned, as among the excellent of the earth, who had gone to that rest, in which he hoped shortly to join their glorified spirits. The clamor which required the names of such men to be blotted out, is disgraceful

(s) Whitelocke's Mem. p. 66.
(t) Pp. 123, 124.
(u) Vol. iii. p. 82.
(x) Baillie's Letters, vol. i. p. 409.

only to those who manifested it. No act of man, or lapse of time, can erase from the roll of England's Christian patriots, the names of Brook, Pym, and Hampden; or deprive them of the glory which justly belongs to their illustrious deeds.

The first and last parts of the Saint's Rest, were all that the author originally designed; the one containing the explanation of the nature of the rest, the other 'a directory for getting and keeping the heart in heaven, by heavenly meditation.' The last, indeed, he tells us, was the main thing intended in the writing of the book, and to which all the rest is subservient. The second part treats of the certainty of the future rest, where he enters much further, than is necessary in such a book, into the evidences of Revelation, mixed up with discussions and stories about apparitions, witches, and compacts with the devil; which are blemishes on the fair face of this beautiful production. The third is on the use which ought to be made of the doctrine and prospect of the everlasting rest. The first four chapters of it being intended for secure and sensual sinners who might happen to read the book; and the three last for Christians, to direct and comfort them in the time of affliction, and to stir them up to seek the salvation of their brethren.

Comparing the first edition of this work, which is very rare, with the subsequent ones, which the author considerably altered, I am disposed to give it the preference. It contains chiefly his own thoughts, as they arose in his mind, and were freely expressed during a period of severe affliction, when he was far removed from books, and had eternity constantly before him. There are very few of those marginal notes and digressions which were supplied at a future period, and that tend much more to distract than to interest the reader.

The very title of this book operates like a charm on the mind of a Christian, and leads him to associate with it the most delightful idea. Everlasting Rest presents to the wearied, harassed, suffering spirit, a prospect full of glory and repose. As the cessation of labor, the termination of suffering, and the end of all evil; in connexion with the eternal enjoyment of God, it is the sum of Christian blessedness: comprehending in it all that is calculated to reconcile to the trials of life, and to sustain under its labors and sorrows. It is a rest which consists not in indisposition or incapacity for action, or in the indulgence of indolence and sloth; but which implies activity without weariness, and exertion without fatigue; the constant employment of our best faculties on the worthiest objects and employments securing that felicity which is to be found only in doing the will of God, without involving exhaustion of spirits, or diminution of strength. What more can man desire to render him supremely happy?

To such a person as Baxter, a martyr to disease and pain, possessed of a spirit characterised by restless activity, which was constantly repressed and counteracted by a body ill adapted to be the instrument of its boundless desires; but who, notwithstanding this counteraction, continually struggled to do the work of God, the hope of rest must have been exquisitely delightful. Surrounded as he was at the same time with all that grieved his spirit, and resisted his effort, it is not wonderful that he fled to the promise of rest as his refuge and his anchor. While he did this, however, he did not surrender himself to the mere contemplation of the joy set before him; it roused and excited him to still greater exertions; or induced that patience *with joyfulness*, of which the apostles speaks, and which is the peculiar effect of the Christian hope.

"It is sweet to look forward to the restitution of all things; to think of a world where God is entirely glorified, and entirely loved, and entirely obeyed; where sin and sorrow are no more; where severed friends shall meet, never again to part; where the body shall not weigh down the spirit, but shall be its fit medium of communication with all the glorious inhabitants and scenery of heaven; where no discordant tones or jarring feelings shall interrupt or mar the harmony of that universal song which shall burst from every heart and every tongue, to him who sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb. And it is not only sweet, but most profitable to meditate on these prospects. It is a most healthful exercise. It brings the soul into contact with that society to which it properly belongs, and for which it was created.

"The world think that these heavenly musings unqualify the mind for present exertion. But this is a mistake, arising from an ignorance of the nature of heaven. The happiness of heaven is the perfection of those principles which lead to the discharge of duty, and therefore the contemplation of it must increase our sense of the importance of duty. That happiness is not entirely a future thing, but rather the completion of a present process, in which every duty bears an important part. The character and the happiness of heaven, like the light and heat of the sun-beams, are so connected, that it is impossible to separate them, and the natural and instinctive desire of the one is thus necessarily linked to the desire of the other. Full of peace, as the prospect of heaven is, there is no indolent relinquishment of duty connected with the contemplation of it: for heaven is full of action. Its repose is like the repose of nature; the repose of planets in their orbits. It is a rest from all controversy with God; from all opposition to his will. His servants serve Him. Farewell, vain world! No rest hast thou to offer

which can compare with this. The night is far spent; soon will *that* day dawn, and the shadows flee away."[y]

'The Saint's Rest' has been one of the most useful of Baxter's works; the most useful to Christians, for whom it was chiefly intended. It appears to have been the means of impressing Mr. Thomas Doolittle, and Mr. John Janeway, two excellent Nonconformist ministers. Sir Henry Ashurst ascribed his conversion to it. Sir Nathaniel Barnardiston, Robert Warburton, of Grange, both persons of great eminence in piety, devoted much of the evenings of their lives to the reading of this book, and derived great enjoyment from it. But these I apprehend, are far from solitary instances; it has gone through many editions, and fully justifies the remark made on it by Dr. Bates, "It is a book for which multitudes will have cause to bless God forever."

The late Mr. Fawcett, of Kidderminster, published an excellent abridgement of it in 1758. It makes no alteration on the sense or even language of the author, but diminishes the bulk of the work by omitting many digressions, controversial discussions, together with the preface, dedications, and other things of a temporary and local nature. From that time, the circulation of the original work has been greatly diminished, but I have no doubt the design of the author has been fully accomplished; as a much greater circulation has been given to his sentiments in a moderate 12mo than could have been obtained for the bulky 4to. Those, however, who wish to do full justice to Baxter and his treatise, will not be satisfied with anything but the original.

Giles Firmin, a Presbyterian minister, who appears to have thought Baxter carried his views of meditation on the 'Saint's Rest' too far, published in 1671, what Baxter calls "a gentle reproof for tying men too strictly to meditation." This Baxter answered immediately in a small pamphlet entitled, 'The Duty of Heavenly Meditation Reviewed against the Exceptions of Mr. Giles Firmin.' 4to. In general, there is little danger of men erring in the extreme of dwelling too much on heavenly and eternal things. The number of persons addicted to mystical devotion, or exclusively engrossed by spiritual exercises, has been small, compared with the multitude even of serious Christians, whose minds have been too little occupied in this manner. The attractions of earth are so powerful, and the affinities of our nature so strong to material objects, that we require every possible excitement and encouragement to look off from the things that are seen and temporal, to those which are unseen and eternal. And as we cannot be influenced by that which we do not know or love, or with which we are not conversant, the more that the unseen world and its permanent glories are the objects of con-

(y) Erskine's Introductory Essay to the Saint's Rest, pp. 3—35.

templation, the more powerfully must we be attracted by them, till meditation on heaven is swallowed up in its full and everlasting enjoyment.

The work on the 'Divine Life,'[z] published in 1664, next demands our attention. The occasion of it, he tells us, was this: "The Countess of Balcarras,[a] before going into Scotland after her abode in England, being deeply sensible of the loss of the company of those friends which she left behind her, desired me to preach the last sermon which she was to hear from me, on these words of Christ: 'Behold the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered every man to his own, and shall leave me alone; and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me.' At her request I preached on this text, and being afterwards desired by her to give it her in writing, and the publication being her design, I prefixed the two other treatises, to make it more considerable, and published them together. The treatise is upon the most excellent subject, but not elaborate at all; being but popular sermons preached in the midst of diverting businesses, accusations, and malicious clamors.

"When I offered it to the press, I was fain to leave out the quantity of one sermon in the end of the second treatise, (that God took Enoch,) wherein I showed what a mercy it is to one that walked with God, to be taken to him from this world; because it is a dark, wicked, malicious, incapable, treacherous, deceitful world, &c. All which the bishop's chaplain must have expunged, because men would think it was all spoken of them. And so the world hath got a protection against the force of our baptismal vow."

This admirable treatise may be placed either under the head of the experimental or the devotional works of our author. I have placed it in the latter class, chiefly for my own convenience in the arrangement of this work. It is divided into three parts —The Knowledge of God—Walking with God—and Converse with God in solitude. This division obviously embraces all the great points of Christian practice and experience. Without the knowledge of God, man can have no objective religion. He is the glorious object of love, veneration, and hope; the source of all pure and spiritual enjoyment; and the spring of all right conduct. He who knows God aright, will, at the same time, walk with God, or in the course of obedience to him; and with

(z) Works, vol. xiii.

(a) Since the remark on the Countess of Balcarras was printed off, I have ascertained that she was married a second time to the unfortunate Earl of Argyle, there referred to. I have seen also a curious letter from her to the Duke of Lauderdale, accompanying the stone taken from the heart of her son, of which Baxter speaks.—*Letters from Lady Margaret Kennedy, afterwards wife to Bishop Burnet.*

(b) Life, part i. p. 120.

this course will be invariably connected, that spiritual fellowship with him which is at once the enjoyment of religion, and the best proof of its reality.

None of the works of Baxter is written with greater sweetness than this. The manner of it is in good keeping with the subject: soft, tender, and full of spirituality. He lays open to the reader, as it were, the very recesses of his own heart; and describes his own character and procedure in delineating the essential features of the Christian character and profession. In himself were combined, in an extraordinary degree, the contemplative and the active in religion. In the former he delighted no less than in the latter. To him the Gospel of Christ was a continual feast. It presented to him a boundless and exhaustless subject; combining all that was holy, excellent, and sublime; all that was most worthy in itself with every thing calculated to inspire the love of goodness, and promote the most joyful compliance with the divine will. In meditation he found relief from the severity of bodily pain, from the anguish of disappointment, and the sorrow of unmerited suffering; from the pains and griefs occasioned by his own sins, or the sins of others. While all around was darkness and tempest, here he found repose to his spirit, and a quiet refuge. When languid, it recruited his strength; when discouraged, it re-invigorated his hope; when exposed to perils, or called to the discharge of arduous duties, it gave fresh energy and animation to his soul. God, as revealed in the economy of redemption, was the grand centre of all the principles, feelings, and exercises of Baxter. It was to him at once an attractive as well as a repelling power; drawing him to holiness and happiness, and repelling every thing that was mean and unworthy from his character, as well as what was more directly evil.

To the extraordinary degree in which the mind of Baxter was imbued with the spiritual knowledge of God, arising from the intimacy of his communion with him, arose no small portion of that energy of character for which he was so distinguished. The proper value of the contemplative life in him was thus strikingly illustrated. In many men, contemplation operates as a principle of seclusion: it renders society disagreeable; the bustle and business of it intolerable. They can be happy only in retirement, and in abstraction from the duties of social obligation. Such persons become a kind of spiritual epicures: who can enjoy only what is exquisite, and adapted to the most delicate palate. The common food of Christianity is unsuited to them. Their religion assumes all the character of a refined, spiritual selfism; concerned only about one thing, and that thing comfort: it partakes not of the active principles or sympathies of apostolic Christianity.

In others, activity is too much separated from meditation. The leaves and the fruit are cultivated without due attention to the root of the tree. Enjoyment is found only, or chiefly in the crowd, or on the stage of public life. Effect is studied rather than principle; and all is supposed to be well if others are but persuaded that it is so. There is little that is permanent and influential in this class of persons. What is thus produced is easily blasted and overthrown. There is a want of sufficient breadth and depth in the foundation, for the superstructure which they endeavor to rear, and hence it often tumbles into ruin. Professed concern for the good of others, when connected with indifference to our own, cannot be sincere in its nature or lasting in its duration. Baxter is a happy illustration of the two great constituent principles of the Christian character now adverted to, and which constitute the subject of the work under consideration.

The chief fault that presents itself to me in this work is, the extent to which he dwells on the natural attributes of God, such as his eternity, simplicity, omnipotence, &c., as comprehended in that knowledge which is eternal life. Not that I would exclude these things; but he has dwelt upon them in undue proportion, and to the exclusion of more extended views of the moral attributes of God, which constitute the grand subject of Revelation, and the great objects of Christian faith and enjoyment. In the natural perfections of God, however, Baxter was furnished with delightful subjects for the exercise of his metaphysical powers. The uses of God's "simple and uncompounded essence of his incorporeality and invisibility," were quite to his taste; though likely to be regarded by the reader as more ingenious than profitable. He has also some disquisitions about sin, as whether "God decrees not, or wills not, *ut evenit peccatum;* and whether he wills *de eventu*, that sin shall not come to pass, when it doth?" in which little light is thrown on these mysterious questions.

These, however, are but trifling blemishes in this valuable work, which abounds with passages of great beauty, illustrative not only of the fine genius, but the intense ardor of Baxter's spirit and feelings. I have just fixed my eye on a page, which I cannot deny myself the pleasure of extracting, though it is but one of many I have been tempted to introduce.

"To walk with God," he says, "is a word so high, that I should have feared the guilt of arrogance in using it, if I had not found it in the Holy Scriptures. It is a word that importeth so high and holy a frame of soul, and expresseth such high and holy actions, that the naming of it striketh my heart with reverence, as if I had heard the voice to Moses 'Put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou

standest is holy ground.' Methinks he that shall say to me, Come see a man that walks with God, doth call me to see one that is next unto an angel or glorified soul. It is a far more reverend object in mine eye than ten thousand lords or princes, considered only in their fleshly glory. It is a wiser action for people to run and crowd together to see a man that walks with God, than to see the pompous train of princes, their entertainments, or their triumph. Oh! happy man that walks with God, though neglected and contemned by all about him! What blessed sights doth he daily see! What ravishing tidings, what pleasant melody doth he daily hear, unless it be in his swoons or sickness! What delectable food doth he daily taste! He seeth, by faith, the God, the glory which the blessed spirits see at hand by nearest intuition! He seeth that in a glass, and darkly, which they behold with open face! He seeth the glorious Majesty of his Creator, the eternal King, the Cause of causes, the Composer, Upholder, Preserver, and Governor of all worlds! He beholdeth the wonderful methods of his providence; and what he cannot reach to see, he admireth, and waiteth for the time when that also shall he open to his view! He seeth by faith the world of spirits, the hosts that attend the throne of God; their perfect righteousness, their full devotedness to God; their ardent love, their flaming zeal, their ready and cheerful obedience, their dignity and shining glory, in which the lowest of them exceed that which the disciples saw on Moses and Elias, when they appeared on the holy mount and talked with Christ! He hears by faith the heavenly concert, the high and harmonious songs of praise, the joyful triumphs of crowned saints, the sweet commemorations of the things that were done and suffered on earth, with the praises of Him that redeemed them by his blood and made them kings and priests unto God. Herein he hath sometimes a sweet foretaste of the everlasting pleasures which, though it be but little, as Jonathan's honey on the end of his rod, or as the clusters of grapes which were brought from Canaan into the wilderness; yet they are more excellent than all the delights of sinners." [c]

Under the general head of his devotional writings it is necessary that I should include the following funeral sermons, from several of which I have already made extracts in the first part of this work; and two treatises on the subject of death. I class them together as they relate chiefly to one topic, and do not call for distinct notice. Their titles, which I give fully, sufficiently explain their nature.

'The last work of a Believer, his passing prayer, recommending his departing spirit to Christ, to be received by him, prepared

(c) Works, vol. xiii. pp. 242, 243.

for the funeral of Mary, the widow first of Francis Charlton, Esq., and after of Thomas Hanmer, Esq.' 1660. 4to. [d]

'A Sermon preached at the funeral of that holy, painful, and fruitful minister of Christ, Mr. Henry Stubbs, about fifty years a successful preacher at Bristol, Wells, Chew, Dursley, London, and divers other places.' 1678. 4to.[e]

'A true Believer's choice and pleasure instanced in the exemplary life of Mrs. Mary Coxe, the late wife of Dr. Thomas Coxe.' 1680. 4to. [f]

'Faithful Souls shall be with Christ, the certainty proved, and their Christianity described and exemplified in the truly Christian life and death of that excellent amiable saint, Henry Ashurst, Esq., citizen of London, briefly and truly published for the conviction of hypocrites and the malignant, the strengthening of believers, and the imitation of all, especially the masters of families in London. Go, and do thou likewise.' 1681. 4to. [g]

'A Sermon preached at the funeral of Mr. John Corbet, that faithful minister of Christ, with his true and exemplary character.' 1682. 4to. [h]

'A treatise of death, the last enemy to be destroyed. [i] Showing wherein its enmity consisteth, and how it is destroyed. Part of it was preached at the funeral of Elizabeth, the late wife of Mr. Joseph Baker, pastor of the church at St. Andrew's, in Worcester. With some few passages of the life of the said Mrs. Baker, observed.' 1659. 8vo. [k]

'Mr. Baxter's Dying Thoughts upon Philippians i. 23. [l] Written for his own use on the latter times of his corporal pains and weakness.' 1683. 4to. [m]

All these discourses and treatises show how familiar the mind of Baxter was with the subject of death, and illustrate the admirable use which he made of it, in promoting the good of others. It was a favorite topic of his ministry from the very beginning, arising out of the feeble state of his health, and from the apprehension which he entertained that his career was likely to be a very short one. Though in this he was mistaken, he never lost the impression that he must soon die, and therefore constantly preached and wrote under that impression.

His 'Dying Thoughts' abound in admirable sentiments, expressed in appropriate and beautiful language, worthy of a believer in the near prospect of eternity. They were written for his own

(d) Works, vol. xiii. p. 11. (e) Ibid. vol. xiii. p. 61. (f) Ibid. p. 91.
(g) Ibid. p. 124. (h) Ibid. p. 163.
(i) Among the Baxter MSS. is a letter from a clergyman of the name of Taylor, at Slandford, acknowledging that the 'Treatise on Death' had been the means of his conversion; and requesting Baxter's advice respecting some difficulties which he felt on the subject of subscription.
(k) Works, vol. xiii. p. 527. (l) Ibid. vol. i. p. 23.
(m) Ibid. vol. xxvii.

use, and originally intended to be left to his executors for publication, but were finally brought out by himself. Calamy puts them under the date of 1685, and represents them as having furnished great consolation to Lord William Russell before his execution. But, as he speaks of himself as in the seventy-sixth year of his age, and the fifty-third of his ministry,[n] which was the year of his death, he must have altered and improved the work shortly before he died.[o]

In these Thoughts, as there are few raptures, so there are no depressions or despondencies. They discover throughout a solemn, calm, undisturbed serenity; the steady contemplation of dissolution and all its consequences, without alarm or terror. He knew in whom he had believed; to him, therefore, death had no sting. Its poison had been extracted, and the grim tyrant deprived of his power to injure. In Christ, his soul had found rest; his life was made sure by the covenant of redemption: so that he could lay down his head and die in the sure and certain hope of a resurrection to glory. Unenviable must be the state of that man's feelings, who can read these reflections as the honest and sincere expressions of a soul ready to take its flight into eternity, without exclaiming, "Let me die the death of this righteous man, and let my latter end be like his."

Among the devotional works of Baxter must be classed 'The Reformed Liturgy,' which he drew up by the request of his brethren, at the time of the Savoy conference. Part of it was published among the other papers relating to that affair, and in his Own Life, by Sylvester; the whole appears among the documents of the Savoy conference; at the end of the first volume of Calamy's Abridgement; in the folio edition of his works; and in the fifteenth volume of the present edition. The circumstances which led to his compiling this work have been sufficiently detailed in the account of the Savoy meeting and debates. Baxter produced an entirely new liturgical service, not because he objected to the whole, or greater part of the former, but as the shortest and easiest method of removing what he considered its defects, its inaccuracies, and repetitions. It was not designed by him to be enforced by legal enactments, in the room of the other; but rather as a specimen, or directory, for conducting the public service of the church. He was occupied on this work not more than a fortnight; a period which he acknowledges to have been "too short for doing it with the accurateness which a business of that nature required; or for the

(n) Works, vol. xvii. p. 331.

(o) His 'Dying Thoughts' were abridged by Fawcett, a work by no means so necessary as the abridgement of the 'Saint's Rest.' Sir James Stonehouse was so delighted with them, that he says, "I have almost learnt them by heart; I am continually quoting them in my letters."—*See Letters from Job Orton, &c.* vol. ii. p. 209.

consulting with men or authors. He could make no use of any book, except a Bible and a Concordance; but he compared it all with the Assembly's Directory, the Book of Common-prayer, Hammond and L'Estrange."[p]

Without pronouncing on the comparative excellencies of this liturgical work, or intimating that it is every thing such a work should be, it is not too much to say, that it is remarkable for simplicity, appropriateness, and fulness. The forms of prayer contain variety without repetition, and are so scriptural that they are made up almost entirely of scriptural language; references to which he has thrown into the margin. Few better liturgies probably exist; and had it, or something of the same improved description, been adopted by the church, at the period when the subject was under discussion, some of the chief difficulties experienced by the early Nonconformists to the Book of Common-prayer would have been removed. There was no disposition then, however, to listen to the voice of candid and conscientious objection; and though the subject has frequently been agitated since, the imperfections of the Anglican Liturgy seem to be increasingly sanctified by time, and every day diminishes the probability of any improvement taking place upon it. The motive for alteration, so far as the Nonconformists are concerned, may be said to be extinguished; as no charge on the liturgical forms of the Church would reconcile the great body of the Dissenters to it. Their objections are now chiefly to the constitution of the church as allied to the state, and to the whole system of episcopal government; objections which no modification of forms and ceremonies would either remove or materially alter.

In this class of writing, I feel justified in placing the only work of an expository nature published by Baxter: his 'Paraphase on the New Testament, with notes, Doctrinal and Practical,' &c. 1685. 4to.[q] Of the trouble into which he was brought by this work, a full account has already been given, in the history of his trial before the infamous Jefferies. It now only remains to say something of the book itself. Its origin and object are well stated by himself in the following passage in the preface.

"A friend long urging me to write a paraphrase on the Epistle to the Romans, as being hard to be understood; when I

(p) Life, part ii. p. 306.

(q) Walch, in his 'Bibliotheca Theologica,' mentions 'Meditations on the Seven Penitential Psalms,' by Baxter. He says they were published in English, and translated into German, in which language they appeared in two editions, 1684 and 1687. He says they are not properly exegetical, but moral, in their nature, and ought to be ranked in that class of books. I cannot positively affirm that Walch is mistaken, but I have never seen any such work of Baxter's; nor does it appear in any catalogue of his books published in England, either by himself or others.

had done it, I found so much profit by the attempt, that it drew me to go on till I had finished what I offer you. It was like almost all my other public works, done by the unexpected conduct of God's urgent providence, not only without, but contrary to my former purposes. God hath blessed his church with many men's excellent commentaries on the Scriptures, and I never thought myself fit to do it better than they have done; but that is best for some persons' use which is not best to others. I long wished that some abler man would furnish vulgar families with such a brief exposition as might be fitted to the use of their daily course in reading the Scriptures, and instructing their households. I found that many who have done it better than I can do, are too large and costly for this use; some, like Diodati, are very sound but unsatisfactorily brief; some have parcelled their annotations into so numerous shreds, that readers, especially in a family course, will not stay to search and set them together to make up the sense. I like Dr. Hammond's order best, but I differ from him in so much of the matter,—take his style to be too lax, his criticisms not useful to the vulgar, and his volume too big and costly; I therefore chose more plainly, and yet more briefly and practically, by the way of paraphrase, to suit it to my intended end.

"But I must give the reader notice, that where I seem but in few words to vary from the text, those words answer the large criticisms of divers expositors, as the learned may find by searching them and the Greek text; though I must not stay to give the reasons of them as I go on. That though I have studied plainness, yet brevity is unavoidably obscure to unexercised persons, who, as learners, cannot understand things without many words. That where the Evangelists oft repeat the same things to avoid tediousness, I repeat not the whole exposition; and yet thought it not meet wholly to pass it by. That where the text is plain of itself, instead of an exposition, I fill up the space by doctrinal, or practical observations, seeing practice is the end of all, and to learners this part is of great necessity. That where great doctrinal controversies depend on the exposition of any text, I have handled those more largely than the rest, and I hope with pacificatory and satisfactory evidence."[r]

Though this work is not critical, and was intended by the author chiefly for the unlearned, it bears marks of considerable labor when attentively examined. Baxter had long and profoundly studied the Scriptures; possessing a large portion of acuteness, and being very independent in his manner of thinking, he often throws considerable light on difficult passages. He does not give the process, but the results; without the

(r) Preface to 'Paraphrase on the New Testament.'

parade of criticism and learning, he frequently furnishes us with their best fruits. So that without toil or labor, we are at once put in possession of what he conceived to be the meaning of the word of God. I feel bound to say, that I have seldom consulted Baxter's Paraphrase, which I have done occasionally for many years, without deriving instruction from it; and finding that it either threw some light on what was dark, or suggested what tended to remove a difficulty.

The reasons which he assigns for not attempting an exposition of the book of Revelation, are worthy of quotation. Among other things, he says,

"I am far below Dionysius, Alexandrinus, and most of the ancient Fathers, even Augustine himself, who professed that they understood it not. Yea, the incomparable Calvin professeth that he understood not the thousandth part of it; and his partner, Beza, would give us little of it, next to none: both refusing to write a comment on it. I honor them that know more than I, and contradict them not; I had rather say too little, where other men have said enough, than say more than I know. It is not through mere sloth that I am ignorant. Women and boys, who have studied it less than I, think they know herein what I do not: but I confess that despair is much of the cause. Forty-four years ago, when I was but young, I studied it, I doubt too soon, and read Brightman, Napier, Pareus, &c., and after that Mede, Potter, and many more; beside such treatises as Downame de Antichristo Broughton, and other such; with the answers of Bellarmine, &c. I met with many divines and laymen who had chosen it out for the chief study of their lives, and I found so great diversity of opinions, five of the most confident going four ways, and so little proof of what they most confidently asserted, that I despaired of being so much wiser than they as to come to satisfaction, if I should lay by more necessary studies, and make this the business of the rest of my life, which yet I durst not do. Afterwards I conversed with my fellow laborer, Mr. Nathaniel Stephens, who hath written of it, and was much upon it in his discourse, but I durst not be drawn to a deep study of it. When since I read Mr. Durham, Dr. More, &c., and Grotius, and Dr. Hammond, and many annotators, I confess despair, and more needful business, made me do it but superficially. And when I had for my own use written the rest of this Paraphrase on the New Testament, I proposed to have said nothing of any more of the Revelations than of the three first chapters, professing that I understood it not; but after, being loth to omit wholly any part of the New Testament, and thinking that the renewed study of that which speaketh so much of the New Jerusalem might be suitable to a pained dying man, I thought of it more searchingly than I had

heretofore; but have not now either the strength of wit, or length of time, that are necessary to so hard a work, and therefore presume not to oppose others, but refer the readers to them that have more thoroughly studied and expounded it than I can do. But yet I thought that those generals which I understood might be useful to unlearned readers, though they made them no wiser than I am myself, while those that are above me have enough higher to read." [s]

The sentiments expressed in this passage are illustrative of the modesty of Baxter, and of his distrust of his own understanding on the difficult subjects of the apocalyptic visions. Without subscribing to the propriety of regarding these visions as unintelligible, considering the little success which has attended the speculations of many respecting their design, diffidence on such subjects is much more a Christian virtue than confidence. It is not difficult to frame a prophetic hypothesis, and to adjust its parts with considerable skill and ingenuity; but to prove that it is the very thing intended by the angel of the apocalypse, requires a portion of wisdom from Him who alone can open its seals, which does not yet appear to have been afforded to any of the sons of men. But while there is much that is obscure in the book, it is delightful to find so much that is intelligible; and that though many of the symbols and hieroglyphics yet remain to be deciphered, the suffering and glory of the Redeemer, the final triumphs of his kingdom and its everlasting duration, are revealed with a clearness not inferior even to that of the Gospel itself.

A posthumous work of a devotional nature by Baxter, appeared after his death, with the following title: 'Monthly Preparations for the Holy Communion, by R. B. To which is added suitable Meditations, before, in, and after recovery; with Divine Hymns in common tunes, fitted for Public Congregations or Private Families.' 1696. 12mo.

This little work has a preface by Sylvester, in which it is very singular that he makes no mention whatever of the meditations as the productions of Baxter. There can be no doubt, however, that they were published from some of Baxter's manuscripts, left in possession of the editor, or that they were furnished by some one who took notes while Baxter delivered them. I am inclined to think the latter must have been their origin; as some of the language is like Baxter's, but other parts of it not. Of the hymns I am unable to form any opinion, whether they were composed by Baxter, or some one else. Their devotion is more worthy of admiration than their poetry.

I must now introduce a class of Baxter's writings, with which

(s) Advertisement to 'Paraphrase on the New Testament.'

few of the readers of his works are familiar. I refer to his poetry, of which I should have been afraid to speak with much confidence in my own judgment, had not Montgomery given him a place among the Christian poets of England, and spoken of him in the following terms:

"This eminent minister of the Gospel, though author of some of the most popular treatises on sacred subjects, is scarcely known by one in a hundred of his admirers, as a writer in verse; yet there is a little volume of 'Poetical Fragments' by him, inestimable for its piety, and far above mediocrity in many passages of its poetry. The longest piece, entitled, 'Love breathing thanks and praise,' contains his spiritual auto-biography, from the earliest impressions made upon his conscience by divine truth, to the breaking out of the civil war between Charles I. and the parliament. In this, and indeed in all the other minor pieces, he speaks the language of a minute self-observer, and tells the experience of his own heart in strains which never lack fervency, nor indeed eloquence, however unapt in the art of turning tuneful periods in rhyme the author may occasionally be found. A great portion of this volume well merits re-publication, as the annexed examples will prove. He that is not powerfully affected by some of these, whatever be his taste in polite literature, may fear that he has neither part nor lot in a matter of infinitely surpassing interest even to himself."[s]

The volume, of which Mr Montgomery thus speaks, and from which he inserts some striking extracts, was first published in 1681, in small 12mo, with the following singular title: 'Poetical Fragments: Heart Employment with God and itself. The concordant discord of a broken healed heart; sorrowing, rejoicing, fearing, hoping, living, dying.'

"These poetical fragments," he says, "except three heretofore printed, were so far from being intended for the press, that they were not allowed the sight of many private friends, nor thought worthy of it; only, had I had time and heart to have finished the first, which itself, according to the nature and designed method, would have made a volume far bigger than all this, being intended as a thankful historical commemoration of all the notable passages of my life, I should have published it as the most self-pleasing part of my writing. But, as they were mostly written in various passions, so passion hath now thrust them out into the world. God, having taken away the dear companion of the last nineteen years of my life, as her sorrows and sufferings long ago gave being to some of these poems, for reasons which the world is not concerned to know; so my grief for her removal, and the revived sense of former things, have prevailed with me to be passionate in the open sight of all."[t]

(s) Montgomery's Christian Poet, p. 320. (t) Epistle, p. 1.

He afterwards published 'Additions to the poetical Fragments, written for himself, and communicated to such as are more for serious verse than smooth.' 1683. He left also, fully prepared for the press, an entire poetical version, or 'Paraphrase of the Psalms of David, with other Hymns.' which were published after his death in 1692, by his friend, Matthew Sylvester. Putting all his pieces together, therefore, we have sufficient means of determining Baxter's claims to the character of a poet.

He himself was not ignorant of the qualities which are necessary to constitute excellence in this department of literature, and puts in his own claims very modestly. "I will do," he says, "my wise friends, whose counsel I have much followed, that right, as to acquit them from all the guilt of the publication of these fragments. Some of them say, that such work is below me; and those that I think speak more wisely, say, I am below such work. These I unfeignedly believe. I have long thought that a painter, a musician, and a poet, are contemptible if they be not excellent; and that I am not excellent, I am satisfied; but I am more patient of contempt than many are. Common painters serve for poor men's works, and a fiddler may serve at a country wedding. Such cannot aspire to the attainments of the higher sort and the vulgar are the greater number. Dr. Stillingfleet saith, 'I seldom follow my friends' advice;' in this I justify him, though in other things my advisers contradict him. I know that natural temper makes poetry savor to several wise and learned men, as differently as meats do to various appetites. I know such learned discreet men, that know not what a tune is, nor can difference one from another. I wonder at them; and oft doubt whether it be an accident, or an integral of humanity which they want. Annatus, the Jesuit, in his answer to Dr. Twisse De Scientia Media, commends his poetry, (for a poem added in the end,) in scorn, as if it were a disgrace to a school divine. I take one sign of an acumen of wit to make it likely that the man hath the same wit for other work.

"For myself, I confess that harmony and melody are the pleasure and elevation of my soul. I have made a psalm of praise in the holy assembly the chief delightful exercise of my religion and my life, and have helped to bear down all the objections which I have heard against church music, and against the 149th and 150th Psalms. It was not the least comfort that I had in the converse of my late dear wife, that our first in the morning, and last in bed at night, was a psalm of praise, till the hearing of others interrupted it. Let those that savor not melody, leave others to their different appetites, and be content to be so far strangers to their delights." [v]

(v) Epistle, pp. 2, 3.

In as far as genius and imagination are essential to the character of a poet, it is impossible to doubt that Baxter possessed high claims to that distinction. His prose writings are full of poetry. His genius every now and then bursts forth where we least expect its appearance; and in no writer of the age are there so many passages exquisite for their pathos and tenderness, or dazzling with splendor. His language is often remarkable for its chasteness, and for its rhythm; so that it would only require a little skill in the mechanical construction of verse, to convert many of his pages into the sweetest poetry.

That he was not skilled in versification, is, at the same time, very obvious. He had the ideas of poetry, and often the expressions also, but could not frame them skilfully, according to the laws of verse. This kind of employment required more patience and labor than he was capable of bestowing. He could not waste time on the collocation of words and syllables; and hence he often becomes tame and prosaic, in immediate connexion with the utterance of the finest and loftiest conceptions.

He lived during what Johnson calls "the age of the metaphysical poets;" whom he describes as learned men, who made it their whole endeavor to show their learning. They yoked the most heterogeneous ideas together by violence; ransacked nature and art for illustrations, comparisons, and allusions. They were fond of conceits, both of idea and phraseology; they broke every image into fragments, and mixed the sublime and ridiculous, the lofty and the low, in the most extraordinary manner. Such were Donne and Denman, Waller and Cowley, according to Johnson; and such he would have reckoned Baxter, had he met with any of his poetical effusions.

The longest of Baxter's poetical pieces, as Montgomery has remarked, is a fragment of his own life and experience in verse. It is entitled 'Love breathing Thanks and Praise,' and is full of the most glowing gratitude. From this poem an extract or two has already been given in the first part of this work. The opening lines run, with a slight exception, very smoothly. They discover the school to which the author belonged, in the manner in which he pursues the leading figure of a worm praising God. Yet there is nothing offensive in the thought or the language.

"Eternal God! this worm lifts up the head,
And looks to Thee, by Thee encouraged;
Cheer'd by thy bounty, it would speak thy praise,
Whose wondrous love hath measur'd all my days.
If thou vouchsafe to make a worm rejoice,
Give him a thankful praising heart and voice.
Thy shining glory blessed angels see:
Angels must sing thy highest praise, not we.
But if thy warming beams cause worms to speak,
Their baser part will not the concert break.

When time was yet no measure, when the sun
Its rapid motion had not yet begun,
When heav'n, and earth, and sea, were yet unfram'd
Angels and men, and all things else un-nam'd;
When there did nothing else exist but thee,
Thou wast the same, and still the same wilt be.
When there was none to know or praise thy name,
Thou wast in perfect blessedness the same." x

In the following passage a most original and poetical image is employed with great felicity, to illustrate the re-forming of man in God's own image. The idea of the Deity taking the signet from his own right hand, to form the stamp by which his own offending creature is to be restored to holiness and bliss, is exquisite in itself, and uncommonly well sustained.

"When man from holy love turn'd to a lie,
Thy image lost, became thine enemy;
O what a seal did love and wisdom find
To re-imprint thine image on man's mind!
Thou sent'st the signet from thine own right hand;
Made man for them that had themselves unman'd.
The Eternal Son, who in thy bosom dwelt,
Essential burning love, men's hearts to melt;
Thy lively image; he that knew thy mind,
Fit to illuminate and heal the blind.
With love's great office thou dist him adorn,
Redeemer of the helpless and forlorn.
On love's chief work and message he was sent:
Our flesh he took, our pain he underwent.
Thy pardoning, saving love to man did preach:
The Reconciler stood up in the breach.
The uncreated image of thy love,
By his assumption and the Holy Dove,
On his own flesh thine image first imprest;
And by that stamp renews it on the rest." y

The account of his early experience, and of the steps by which he was first led to choose God for his portion, and then his work as his great employment, is very admirably given. In the following passage he describes how God takes advantage of the natural love of self which belongs to man, and implants his own fear, as a seedling which gradually ripens into the love of God and of goodness, and brings forth fruit to his glory.

"Fear is the soil that cherisheth the seed,
The nursery in which heav'n's plants do breed.
God first in nature finds self-love, and there
He takes advantage to implant his fear.
With some, the time is long before the earth
Disclose her young one by a springy birth.
When heav'n doth make our winter sharp and long,
The seed of love lies hid, or seems but young,
But when God makes it spring-time, his approach
Takes from the barren soil its great reproach;
When heav'n's reviving smiles and rays appear,
Then love begins to spring up above fear;

(x) Poetical Fragments. p. 1. (y) Ibid. pp 6, 7.

And if sin hinder not by cursed shade,
It quickly shoots up to a youthful blade.
And when heav'n's warmer beams and dews succeed,
That's ripen'd fruit which e'en now was but seed.
Yet doth not flow'ring, fruitful, love forget
Her nursing fear, there still her root is set;
In humble self-denial undertrod,
While flower and fruit are growing up to God." z

There is a short poem, entitled 'The Resolution,' which was composed when he was silenced and cast out of the church. It conveys his reflections on that sorrowful event, and expresses his high determination to suffer the loss of all things for Christ's sake. The following lines, referring to the dispersion of friends, the storms of life, and the final assembling, are very beautiful, though the figure is not uncommon.

"As for my friends, they are not lost:
The several vessels of thy fleet,
Though parted now by tempests tost,
Shall safely in the haven meet.
Still we are centred all in Thee;
Members, tho' distant of one head,
In the same family we be,
By the same faith and Spirit led.
Before thy throne we daily meet,
As joint petitioners to Thee;
In spirit we each other greet,
And shall again each other see.
The heavenly hosts, world without end,
Shall be my company above;
And thou, my best, my surest Friend,
Who shall divide me from thy love?" a

From the dialogue between Flesh and Spirit, I have already given a very beautiful extract, in noticing the work on self-denial, to which it was first attached. The dialogue between Death and a Believer is very gravely intended, and contains some very good passages, but is occasionally ludicrous. The same remark applies to the poems on grace, wisdom, madness, hypocrisy, and man. They abound with the faults of the metaphysical poets, interspersed with flashes of real poetical genius.

His Psalms are far from contemptible; for, although few of them are without rugged and prosaic lines, they frequently contain very good stanzas. He had evidently bestowed considerable pains on his version. There is a peculiarity in the structure of the verse, which often discovers mechanical ingenuity, though it contributes frequently to destroy the poetry. By putting certain words in a different character within brackets, he contrives to make the verse long or short, as these words are used or omitted. He did this, he tells us, because "nature weary of sameness, is re-created with a variety of tunes." I shall give as a specimen the first stanzas of the twenty-third

(z) Poetical Fragments, p. 16. (a) Ibid. p. 41.

Psalm, printed after this plan, which may be considered a fair average sample of the whole.

"The Lord himself my shepherd is,
Who doth me feed and [safely] keep;
What can I want that's truly good,
While I am [one of] his own sheep?
He makes me to lie down and rest
In [pleasant] pastures, tender grass;
He keeps and gently leadeth me
Near [the sweet] streams of quietness.
My failing soul he doth restore,
And lead in [safe and] righteous ways;
And all this freely, that his grace,
And [holy] name may have the praise."

It is pleasant to remark the delight and enjoyment which this holy man felt in sacred poetry and music; a delight which he seems to have cherished to the very last. Sylvester tells us in his preface to his Psalms, that "when his sleep was intermitted or removed in the night, he then sang much; and on the Lord's-days, he thought the service very defective, without some considerable time were spent in singing; nay, he believingly expected that his angelical convoy would conduct him through all the intermediate regions, to his appointed mansion in his heavenly Father's house, with most melodious hallelujahs, or with something equally delightful." In this frame of mind, he probably was when he composed his 'Exit,' and his 'Valediction.' In both he takes his leave of the world, satisfied to be gone, and longing for the enjoyment of his Lord. I quote a few stanzas from the former, as a *vale* to the poetry of Baxter.

"My soul, go boldly forth,
Forsake this sinful earth;
What hath it been to thee
But pain and sorrow?
And thinkest thou 'twill be
Better to-morrow?

Look up towards heav'n and see
How vast those regions be,
Where blessed spirits dwell,
How pure and lightful!
But earth is near to hell,
How dark and frightful!

Jerusalem above,
Glorious in light and love,
Is mother of us all.
Who shall enjoy them?
The wicked hell-ward fall,
Sin will destroy them.

God is essential love;
And all the saints above
Are like unto him made,
Each in his measure.
Love is their life and trade,
Their constant pleasure.

What joy must there needs be,
Where all God's glory see!
Feeling God's vital love,
Which still is burning:
And flaming God-ward move,
Full love returning.

Lord Jesus, take my spirit:
I trust thy love and merit;
Take home this wand'ring sheep,
For thou hast sought it;
This soul in safety keep,
For thou hast bought it." [b]

I have dwelt longer on Baxter's poetical pieces than, to some, their importance may seem to justify. I have been the more particular, however, because they are less known than most of his writings, and because they form a very appropriate conclusion to his devotional works. They show what every thing which Baxter wrote confirms, that his religion was a religion of enjoyment. It is the more necessary to remark this, because a superficial observer may be induced to suppose that the contrary was the case. His writings, it will be remarked, speak much of mortification, and self-denial, and crucifixion. They do; and Baxter felt himself impelled to dwell on these subjects, because he regarded the evils which render them necessary as the true banes of man's happiness. He was persuaded that, till the habit of resisting and conquering the flesh and the world be formed, and unless it be kept in constant exercise, no real enjoyment can be found. The self-denial which he, therefore, inculcated, arose out of the state of human nature, and was directed to the highest good of man—the enjoyment of the divine complacency.

Baxter was probably regarded by the men of the world of his own age, as one of the most demure, joyless, mortified persons on earth; and such, on their principles, he certainly was. Yet Baxter was a singularly happy man. He tells us that he knew nothing of low spirits or nervous depression, notwithstanding all his bodily sufferings. His hopes of heaven and its blessedness were rarely clouded from the beginning to the end of his Christian course. His hands were constantly full of his Master's work, and his heart ardently set upon the accomplishment of it. The pulse of the Christian life ever beat most vigorously in his veins; the Christian walk he steadily pursued; and its close was as peaceful and serene as its progress had been honorable.

It is pleasing to read of the melody of his feelings, of the tenderness or "passion" of his heart, of his songs in the night, and his delight in sacred poetry and music. They are evidences

(b) Poetical Fragments, pp. 148—153.

of the rest which his soul had found in God. There was a close and holy union between the fountain of living joy and his renovated spirit. "Being justified by faith, he had peace with God through the Lord Jesus Christ, and rejoiced in hope of the glory of God." Devotion was his element, and its exercises were his delight. By this means he renewed his impaired strength, restored his lost tranquillity, and replenished his exhausted comfort. It was the master-principle of his mind and character; that which harmonized and adjusted all their movements, and guided all their aims. I may, with the greatest propriety, accommodate to himself the beautiful description which he gives of a Christian's devout meditations in the conclusion of his 'Saint's Rest.'

"As Moses, before he died, went up into Mount Nebo, to take a survey of the land of Canaan, so he ascended the mount of contemplation, and by faith surveyed his heavenly rest. He looked on the delectable mansions, and said, 'Glorious things are deservedly spoken of thee, thou city of God.' He heard, as it were, the melody of the heavenly choir, and said, 'Happy the people that are in such a case; yea, happy is that people whose God is the Lord.' He looked upon the glorious inhabitants, and exclaimed, 'Happy art thou, O, Israel!' Who is like unto thee, O people, saved by the Lord!' He looked on the Lord himself, who is their glory, and was ready, with the rest, to fall down and worship Him that liveth forever and ever. He looked on the glorified Saviour, and was ready to say 'Amen,' to that new song, 'Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.' He looked back on the wilderness of this world, and blessed the believing, patient, despised saints; he pitied the ignorant, obstinate, miserable world. For himself, when thus employed, he said, with Peter, 'It is good to be here,' or, with Asaph, 'It is good for me to draw near to God.' Like Daniel, in his captivity, he daily opened his window, looking towards the Jerusalem that is above, though far out of sight. Like Paul's affections towards his brethren, though absent in the flesh from the glorified saints, he was yet with them in spirit, joying and beholding their heavenly order." [c]

Engaging so deeply in these delightful exercises of holy contemplation, he was thus eminently qualified to explain and recommend them to others. They constitute the life of the soul, the beauty of religion, the glory of the Christian. "As the lark sings sweetly while she soars on high, but is suddenly silenced when she falls to the earth; so is the frame of the soul most delightful and divine, while it keepeth God in view by

(c) 'Saint's Rest,' 4to. p. 814.

contemplation. But, alas! we make there too short a stay, and lay by our music."[d]

Will the reader now join with me in closing this chapter with the beautiful prayer which concludes the 'Rest?' "O Thou, the merciful Father of spirits, the attractive of love, and ocean of delight! draw up these drossy hearts unto thyself, and keep them there till they are spiritualized and refined! Second thy servant's weak endeavors, and persuade those that read these lines to the practice of this delightful, heavenly work! Oh! suffer not the soul of thy most unworthy servant to be a stranger to those joys which he describes to others; but keep me while I remain on earth in daily breathing after thee, and in a believing, affectionate walking with thee. And when thou comest, let me be found so doing: not serving my flesh, nor asleep with my lamp unfurnished, but waiting and longing for my Lord's return. Let those who shall read these pages, not merely read the fruit of my studies, but the breathing of my active hope and love; that if my heart were open to their view, they might there read thy love most deeply engraven with a beam from the face of the Son of God; and not find vanity, or lust, or pride within, where the words of life appear without; that so these lines may not witness against me; but, proceeding from the heart of the writer, may be effectual, through thy grace, upon the heart of the reader, and so be the savour of life to both."[e]

CHAPTER XIII.

GENERAL CONCLUSION.

Baxter, the author of Prefaces to many Books by others—Leaves various Treatises in Manuscript—His extensive Correspondence still preserved—Letter to Increase Mather—Account of Transactions with his Booksellers—Concurrence of Opinions respecting him as a Writer—Barrow—Boyle—Wilkins—Usher—Manton—Bates—Doddridge—Kippis—Orton—Addison—Johnson—Grainger—Wilberforce—His own Review of his Writings—Its characteristic candor and fidelity—The magnitude of his Labors as a Writer—The number and variety of his Works—His Readiness—His Style—Sometimes injudicious both in his Writings and his Conduct—Deficient in the full statement of Evangelical Doctrine—Causes of this Deficiency—Conclusion.

Having laid before the reader some account of every book published by Baxter, as far as can be ascertained, with those observations which have been suggested by their nature and design, it only remains that I should collect together some miscellaneous circumstances, which could not properly be noticed under any of the preceding heads, and offer some concluding remarks on the character of Baxter as a writer.

(d) 'Saint's Rest,' p. 315. (e) Ibid. 4to. p. 315.

Besides the books he wrote himself, he prefixed generally at the desire of their respective authors, prefaces or commendatory epistles to a great number of publications. Of these, Calamy has given the following enumeration, which I have no doubt could be greatly increased, were it of sufficient importance to devote the time which such a research would require:

"We have a preface of his before Mr. Swinnock's book of 'Regeneration;' another before a book of Mr. Eede's; another before Mr. Jonathan Hanmer's 'Exercitation of Confirmation;' another before Mr. Lawrence's, of 'Sickness;' two before two of Mr. Tombes's books; another before a discourse of Mr. William Bell's, of 'Patience;' an introduction to Mr. Jos. Allein's 'Life;' a preface to his 'Alarm to the Unconverted;' another to Howe's 'Blessedness of the Righteous;' another to Mr. Clark's 'Annotations on the New Testament;' another to Mr. Abraham Clifford's 'Discourse on the Two Covenants;' another to one edition of Mr. Rawlet's book of the 'Sacrament:' another to the eleventh of Scuder's 'Daily Walk;' another to Mr. William Allen, of the 'Covenants;' another to a book of Dr. Bryan's, of 'Dwelling with God;' another to Mr. Hotchkis's 'Forgiveness of Sin;' another to Mr. Gouge's 'Surest and Safest Way of Thriving;' another to Mr. Obed. Wills, of 'Infant Baptism,' against Mr. Danvers's; and one to Mr. Corbet's 'Remains;' with many others."[f]

Baxter left several treatises in a more or less prepared state for publication, besides all that he published himself. Some of these saw the light afterwards, others remain, or have been destroyed. His work on 'Universal Redemption,' 'The Protestant Religion Justified,' his 'Poetical Paraphrase of the Psalms,' the 'Narrative of his own Life,' his 'Mother's Catechism,' 'Monthly Preparation for the Communion,' have all been noticed already among his posthumous publications.

Into the subject of what he calls 'Physical Predetermination,' he appears to have entered very largely; and there yet remains among his manuscripts what would make a considerable volume on it. It seems to be in reference to this manuscript, that he says in his Own Life:

"When I had written my book against Mr. Gale's 'Treatise for Predetermination,' and was intending to print it, the good man fell sick of a consumption, and I thought it meet to suspend the publication, lest I should grieve him, and increase his sickness, of which he died. And that I might not obscure God's providence about sin, I wrote and preached two sermons to show what great and excellent things God doth in the world by the occasion of man's sin; and, verily, it is wonderful to

(f) Abridgement, vol. i. pp. 241, 242.

observe that in England all parties, prelatical first, Independents, Anabaptists, especially Papists, have been brought down by themselves, and not by the wit and strength of their enemies; and we can hardly discern any footsteps of any of our own endeavors, wit, or power, in any of our late deliverances, but our enemies' wickedness and bloody designs have been the occasion of almost all: yea, the Presbyterians themselves have suffered more by the dividing effect of their own covenant, and their unskilfulness in healing the divisions between them and the Independents and Anabaptists and the Episcopalians, than by any strength that brought them down; though since men's wrath hath trodden them as in the dirt."[g]

On the subject of predestination, Baxter says a great deal in the second book of his Catholic Theology, in which he endeavors to reconcile "the Synodists and Arminians, the Calvinists and Lutherans, the Dominicans and Jesuits." Judging from what he says on the subject in that work, I should not suppose that his separate treatise throws much light on it, or that the world sustains a great loss from its suppression. Theophilus Gale, for whom this intended treatise was designed, was one of the profoundest scholars and theologians of his time. His learning was more extensive and accurate than Baxter's, and his judgment, both in metaphysics and theology, more correct. His 'Court of the Gentiles,' in which, among other subjects, he discusses predestination, and free-will, and their consistency with each other, is without exception, the profoundest book of the age. It contains greater stores of pagan and sacred learning, on every thing relating to the whole range of philosophy and religion, than any book which had previously appeared.

Baxter left also 'Divers Disputations on sufficient Grace; several Miscellaneous Disputations on various Questions in Divinity, briefly managed at the Monthly Meeting of Ministers held while he was at Kidderminster. 'Two Replies to Mr. Lawson's Animadversions on his Aphorisms;' 'A Reply to Warren's Animadversions' on the same book; and the commencement of 'A Reply to Dr. Wallis's Animadversions:' beside many other pieces in a more or less prepared state for publication. Most of these treatises still remain among the Baxter MSS. deposited in the Redcross-street library. None of them appear to me to be deserving of publication; as among the printed works of Baxter sufficient is to be found already on all the subjects of which they treat.

The most interesting portion of these manuscript collections is the correspondence. There are many hundred letters between

(g) Life, part iii. p. 185. There is another passage in Baxter's Life in which he speaks disrespectfully of Gale and his work; this he was too apt to do, where he differed from a brother author.—Part iii. p. 183.

Baxter and his friends on a great variety of subjects; extending from an early period of his public life till near the time of his death. Sylvester appears to have intended the publication of a volume of these letters;[h] but, for reasons which do not appear, abandoned the design. All Baxter's manuscripts in his possession were at last deposited in the hands of Dr. Williams's trustees, by whom they have been carefully preserved.

Though I did not find on examining these letters much additional matter that could be used in this Life of Baxter, he having published every thing of importance respecting himself, I feel satisfied that a volume or two of very interesting letters might be furnished from them. An editor of competent abilities and leisure could produce a very valuable selection. Among Baxter's correspondents were some of the most distinguished men of his times. Lord Chief-Justice Hale, the Duke of Lauderdale, Lord Clarendon, the Earl of Orrery, Archbishop Tillotson, Bishop Brownrigge, Henry More, Glanville, Robert Boyle, Greaves, Henry Dodwell, Heylin, Bruno Ryves, Gataker, Vines, Owen, Howe, Bates, Peter Du Moulin, Dr. Hill, Arrowsmith, Burgess, William Penn, Eliot, Mather of New England, and a multitude of others. Many of Baxter's letters to his friends are very long; and as he appears to have been in the practice of keeping copies of those which he regarded as important, all of which are in his own hand, his correspondence alone must have created to him vast labor. In numerous instances he appears to have been treated by troublesome persons, who applied to him to solve their doubts and perplexities, and exercised his ingenuity by their cases of conscience. Where he considered the laity in earnest, he seems never to have been unwilling, though at the expense of great labor to himself, to attempt affording them satisfaction.

A short letter that he wrote to Increase Mather, which Palmer thinks may have been among the last he ever wrote, is so excellent and characteristic of the writer, that it will not be considered out of its place here. It refers to Cotton Mather's Life of Eliot, the apostle of the Indians, and the valued correspondent of Baxter.

"Dear Brother,

"I thought I had been near dying at twelve o'clock in bed: but your book revived me; I lay reading it until between one and two. I knew much of Mr. Eliot's opinions by many letters which I had from him. There was no man on earth whom I honored above him. It is his evangelical work that is the apostolical succession which I plead for. I am now dying I

(h) Preface to Baxter's MSS.

hope as he did. It pleased me to read from him my case. 'My understanding faileth, my memory faileth, and my hand and pen fail, but my charity faileth not.' That word much comforted me. I am as zealous a lover of the New England Churches as any man, according to Mr. Noyes', Mr. Norton's and Mr. Mitchael's, and the Synod's model. I love your father upon the letters I received from him. I love *you* better for your learning, labors, and peaceable moderation. I love your *son* better than either of you, for the excellent temper that appeareth in his writings. O that godliness and wisdom may thus *increase* in all families. He hath honored himself half as much as Mr. Eliot; I say half as much, for deeds excel words. God preserve you and New England. Pray for your fainting languishing friend,

"Aug. 3, 1691. Ri. Baxter." [i]

A person who had so much to do with the press as Baxter, must have been connected with the principal religious booksellers of the period, and a knowledge of his transactions with them must throw some light on the extent to which religious works were circulated at this time. From the multitude of books published by Baxter, many of which appear to us uninteresting, it appears surprising that the author should have found encouragement to print them. It appears, however, that he could not only publish without risk, but that they were the source of a considerable revenue, which he generally applied to some benevolent purpose. In the following document, written as a vindication of himself from a charge of ruining his booksellers, he gives a very interesting account of the manner in which he transacted business with them. It affords us also some additional illustration of the circumstances and the disinterestedness of Baxter. After adverting to several of the false charges which had been circulated against him, he thus proceeds:

"But now comes a new trial: my sufferings are my crimes. My bookseller, Nevil Symmonds, is broken, and it is reported that I am the cause, by the excessive rates that I took for my books of him; and a great dean, whom I much value, foretold that I would undo him. Of all the crimes in the world, I least expected to be accused of covetousness. Satan being the master of this design to hinder the success of my writings when I am dead, it is part of my warfare, under Christ, to resist him. I tell you, therefore, truly all my covenants and dealings with booksellers to this day.

"When I first ventured upon the publication of my thoughts, I knew nothing of the art of booksellers. I did, as an act of

(i) Palmer's Noncon. Mem. vol. iii. p. 406.

mere kindness, offer my book called 'The Saint's Rest,' to Thomas Underhill and Francis Tyton, to print, leaving the matter of profit, without any covenants, to their ingenuity. They gave me ten pounds for the first impression, and ten pounds a piece, that is twenty pounds for every after impression, till 1665. I had, in the mean time, altered the book, by the addition of divers sheets. Mr. Underhill died; his wife became poor. Mr. Tyton had losses by the fire in 1666. They never gave, nor offered me a farthing for any impression after that, nor so much as one of the books; but I was fain out of my own purse to buy all that I gave to any friends or poor person that asked it.

"This loosening me from Mr. Tyton, Mr. Symmonds stepped in, and told me that Mr. Tyton said he never got three-pence by me, and brought witness. Hereupon I used Mr. Symmonds only. When I lived at Kidderminster, some had defamed me of a covetous getting of many hundred pounds by the booksellers. I had, till then, taken of Mr. Underhill, Mr. Tyton, and Mr. Symmonds, for all, save the 'Saint's Rest,' the fifteenth book, which usually I gave away: but if any thing for second impressions were due, I had little in money from them, but in such books I wanted at their rates. But when this report of my great gain came abroad, I took notice of it in print, and told them I intended to take more hereafter: and ever since I took the fifteenth book for myself and friends, and eighteen-pence more for every ream of the other fourteen which I destinated to the poor. With this, while I was at Kidderminster, I bought Bibles, to give to all the poor families; and I got three hundred or four hundred pounds, which I destined all to charitable uses. At last, at London, it increased to eight hundred and thirty pounds, which, delivering to a worthy friend, he put it into the hands of Sir Robert Viner, with a hundred pounds of my wife's, where it lieth, settled on a charitable use after my death, as from the first I resolved. If it fails, I cannot help it. I never received more of any bookseller than the fifteenth book, and this eighteen-pence a ream. And if, for after impressions, I had more of those fifteenths than I gave away, I took about two third parts of the common price of the bookseller, or little more, and oft less; and sometimes I paid myself for the printing many hundreds to give away; and sometimes I bought them of the bookseller above my number, and sometimes the gain was my own necessary maintenance; but I resolved never to lay up a groat of it for any but the poor.

"Now, sir, my own condition is this: Of my patrimony or small inheritance I never took a penny to myself, my poor kindred needing much more. I am fifteen or sixteen years divested of all ecclesiastical maintenance. I never had any church or

lecture that I received wages from, but, within these three or four years much against my disposition, I am put to take money of the bounty of special particular friends; my wife's estate being never my property, nor much more than half our yearly expense. If, then, it be any way unfit for me to receive such a proportion as aforesaid, as the fruit of my own long and hard labor for my necessary and charitable uses; and if they that never took pains for it have more right than I, when every laborer is master of his own, or if I may not take some part with them, I know not the reason of any of this. Men grudge not a cobbler, or a tailor, or any day laborer, for living on his labors; and why an ejected Minister of Christ, giving freely five parts to a bookseller, may not take the sixth to himself, or to the poor, I know not. But what is the thought or word of man?

"Dr. Bates now tells me, that for his book, called the 'Divine Harmony,' he had above a hundred pounds, yet reserving the power for the future to himself; for divers impressions of the Saint's Rest, almost twice as big, I have not had a farthing: for no book have I had more than the fifteenth book to myself and friends, and the eighteen-pence a ream for the poor and works of charity, which the devil so hateth, that I find it a matter past my power, to give my own to any good use; he so robs me of it, or maketh men call it a scandalous thing. Verily, since I devoted all to God, I have found it harder to give it when I do my best, than to get it: though I submit of late to him partly upon charity, and am so far from laying up a groat, that (though I hate debt) I am long in debt," &c. &c. &c.[k]

This letter was written in 1678. In his Life, Baxter declares, that Symmons must have received in mere charity from him, that is, I suppose, more than he was strictly entitled to demand, a sum not less than five hundred pounds, if not nearly a thousand. The money which Baxter appropriated from his profits to a charitable purpose, he unfortunately lost by the shutting up of the exchequer; so that the hard-earned gains of many years were lost in one day. From Baxter's statement of the agreement with the booksellers, it is very evident that the circulation of his works must have been extensive, to enable them to afford the sums which he expended. Comparing these with the compensation received for Paradise Lost, it is clear that the publishers and the public then were better judges of poetry than of theology. A singular reverse has taken place since that period.

There is a remarkable concurrence of opinions respecting the character and talents of Baxter, even among those who must be regarded as unfavorable to many of the sentiments for

(k) Appendix to Baxter's Own Life, No. xii.

which he contended. This agreement can be accounted for only on the ground, that the high integrity of his character and the superiority of his talents were beyond dispute; and that the evident tendency of all his writings is to promote the best interests of men. His contemporaries in the church, as well as his brethren out of it, unite in their testimony to his worth and greatness, and the value of his writings.

Dr. Barrow said, his practical writings were never mended, and his controversial ones seldom confuted. With a view to his casuistical writings, the honorable Robert Boyle, declared, "He was the fittest man of the age for a casuist, because he feared no man's displeasure, nor hoped for any man's preferment." Bishop Wilkins observed of him, that he had cultivated every subject he had handled; that if he had lived in the primitive times, he would have been one of the fathers of the church; and that it was enough for one age to produce such a person as Mr. Baxter. Archbishop Usher's high thoughts of him, appeared in his earnest importunity to induce him to write on the subject of conversion. Dr. Manton thought Mr. Baxter came nearer the apostolical writings than any man in the age. Dr. Bates' opinion of his eloquence has been given already. "His books," he says, "for their number and variety of matter, make a library. They contain a treasure of controversial, casuistical, and practical divinity. His books of practical divinity have been effectual for more numerous conversions of sinners to God, than any printed in our time; and while the church remains on earth, will be of continual efficacy to recover lost souls. There is a vigorous pulse in them that keeps the reader awake and attentive."[1]

Few men were capable of forming a better or more candid opinion of Baxter than Dr. Doddridge. He was well acquainted with his writings, very similar to him in his sentiments, and partook largely of his desire to be useful to all men. He thus expresses his opinion of his character as a writer:

"His style is inaccurate, because he had no regular education; and because he wrote continually in the views of eternity: but judicious, nervous, spiritual, and remarkably evangelical: a manly eloquence, and the most evident proof of an amazing genius: with respect to which he may not improperly be called the English Demosthenes: exceeding proper for conviction: see his 'Saint's Rest,' all his treatises on conversion, and especially his 'Call to the Unconverted,' 'Divine Life, and Counsels to Young Men:' few were ever more instrumental for awakening and converting more souls. His book of converse with God in solitude, is a most sublime piece of devotion: his Gildas Sal-

(1) These testimonies are collected by Fawcett in the Preface to his 'Abridgement of the Saint's Rest.'

vianus is a most extraordinary piece, and should be read by every young minister before he takes a people under his stated care; and I think the practical part of it deserves to be read every two or three years: for nothing has a greater tendency to awaken the spirit of a minister to that zeal in his work, for want of which many good men are but shadows of what by the blessing of God they might be, if the maxims and treasures laid down in that incomparable treatise were strenuously pursued."[m]

In a letter to a friend, giving him some account of his studies, Doddridge says, "Baxter is my particular favorite. It is impossible to tell you how much I am charmed with the devotion, good sense, and pathos, which is every where to be found in him. I cannot forbear looking upon him as one of the greatest orators, both with regard to copiousness, acuteness, and energy, that our nation hath produced; and if he hath described, as I believe, the temper of his own heart, he appears to have been so far superior to the generality of those whom we charitably hope to be good men, that one would imagine that God raised him up to disgrace and condemn his brethren; to show what a Christian is, and how few in the world deserve the character. I have lately been reading his Gildas Salvianus, which hath cut me out much work among my people. This will take me off from so close an application to my private studies, as I could otherwise covet, but may answer some valuable ends with regard to others and myself."

But these commendatory opinions of Baxter have not been confined to evangelical Churchmen and Dissenters; the literary men of the nation have not been backward to express their approbation of Baxter's talents and piety. Dr. Kippis, under the article 'Doddridge' in the 'Biographia Britannica,' institutes a comparison between him and Job Orton, the author of 'Doddridge's Memoirs.'—"It has occurred," he says "to us, that Mr. Orton, who so long resided at Kidderminster, the principal seat of Mr. Baxter's ministerial usefulness, had a considerable resemblance in certain respects to that famous divine. In extent of abilities, Baxter was greatly superior to Mr. Orton, and he prodigiously exceeded him in the multiplicity of his writings; but with regard to the nature of their practical works and the strictness, we had almost said the rigidness, of their personal piety, there was no small degree of similarity. Both of them display in their productions the same ardent zeal to excite the attention of men to their eternal concerns, and urge these concerns with peculiar energy and pathos. Both of them were animated with a seriousness of spirit which seems never to have forsaken them in the most ordinary occurrences of life; nor

(m) Orton's 'Letters to Dissenting Ministers,' vol. i. pp. 185, 186.

could either of them bear to be much interrupted in their sacred employments. When some visitors to Mr. Baxter, after having sitten awhile with him, said, 'We are afraid, sir, that we break in upon your time?' His answer was, 'To be sure you do.'"[n]

While this passage shows the high idea which Kippis entertained of Baxter's character, I conceive that the points of resemblance between him and Orton were very few. Orton was stiff, formal, and cautious to a fault, not to mention other particulars; qualities the very opposite of those which distinguished Baxter, whose warmth and energy often involved him in difficulties, which the timid prudence of the other was sure to prevent. The souls of the two men were cast in totally different moulds. Baxter would have set the world on fire, while Orton was lighting a match.

Orton himself held Baxter in the highest veneration. In one of his letters to the Rev. Mr. Hughes, he says, "I would recommend you to read some practical divinity every day; especially the works of Howe, Henry, Watts, Doddridge, and writers of that strain and spirit, whom God eminently honored as instruments of great usefulness in his church. Above all, Baxter, who was, with regard to the success of his labors and writings, superior to them all."[o]

"Addison says, 'I once met with a page of Mr. Baxter; upon the perusal of it, I conceived so good an idea of the author's piety, that I bought the whole book.' Dr. Samuel Johnson, in his 'Rambler,' has quoted Baxter twice, (No. 71 and 196) in such a manner as to show that he considered his name to be worthy of a place amongst the highest authorities. He is also frequently mentioned in Johnson's conversations with Boswell: and once, when Boswell asked him what works of Richard Baxter he should read? 'Read any of them,' said the sage, 'for they are all good.'"[p]

But no writer has more accurately or candidly sketched the character of Baxter than Grainger, whose invaluable Biographical History supplies information about numerous individuals, of whom no account is any where else to be found; and who rarely distorts his portraits under the influence of personal or professional prejudice.

"Richard Baxter," he says, "was a man famous for weakness of body and strength of mind; for having the strongest sense of religion himself, and exciting a sense of it in the thoughtless and the profligate; for preaching more sermons, engaging in more controversies, and writing more books, than any other Nonconformist of his age. He spoke, disputed, and

(n) Biographia Britannica, vol. v. p. 314.
(o) Orton's 'Letters to Dissenting Ministers,' vol. i. p. 103.
(p) Ibid. pp. 315, 316.

wrote with ease; and discovered the same intrepidity when he reproved Cromwell and expostulated with Charles II. as when he preached to a congregation of mechanics. His zeal for religion was extraordinary; but it seems never to have prompted him to faction, or carried him to enthusiasm. This champion of the Presbyterians was the common butt of men of every other religion, and of those who were of no religion at all. But this had very little effect upon him: his presence and his firmness of mind on no occasion forsook him. He was just the same man before he went into a prison, while he was in it, and when he came out of it; and he maintained a uniformity of character to the last gasp of his life. His enemies have placed him in hell; but every man who has not ten times the bigotry that Mr. Baxter himself had, must conclude that he is in a better place. This is a very faint and imperfect sketch of Mr. Baxter's character. Men of his size are not to be drawn in miniature. His portrait, in full proportion, is in his 'Narrative of his own Life and Times,' which though a rhapsody, composed in the manner of a diary, contains a great variety of memorable things, and is, in itself, as far as it goes, a history of Nonconformity." [q]

I cannot close this collection of testimonies to the merits of Baxter, without adding that of Mr. Wilberforce, a name which will ever be dear to every friend of religion and humanity. I cannot help saying, however, he ought not to have considered Baxter as exclusively the property of the Church of England. Baxter, though not properly a Dissenter, was, in the strictest sense of the term, a Nonconformist. "I must beg," says Mr. Wilberforce, "to class among the brightest ornaments of the Church of England, this great man, who, with his brethren, was so shamefully ejected from the church in 1662, in violation of the royal word, as well as of the dear principles of justice. With his controversial pieces I am little acquainted; but his practical writings, in four massy folios, are a treasury of Christian wisdom. It would be a most valuable service to mankind to revise them, and, perhaps, to abridge them, to render them more suited to the taste of modern readers. This has been already done in the case of his 'Dying Thoughts,' a beautiful little piece, and of his 'Saint's Rest.' His 'Life,' also, written by himself, and in a separate volume, contains much useful matter, and many valuable particulars of the history of the times of Charles I., Cromwell," &c. [r]

Having presented to the reader a selection of the opinions which have been expressed of Baxter, as a writer, by men of the first eminence, both in his own times and since, I have re-

(q) Biog. Hist. vol. v. pp. 31, 32. (r) Wilberforce's Practical Piety, p. 24.

served his own opinion, or review for the last. As no man was so fully acquainted with his writings as himself, so no one could express a more enlightened or candid opinion of them than he has done. It leans to the side of severity rather than of leniency, and presents so amiable a view of the author's character that it cannot fail to excite esteem and admiration. Combined with his review of his Christian character and experience, it presents what Grainger justly calls a full-length portrait of the man. He judged himself that he might not be judged, and was evidently far more sensible of his own imperfections, and more ready to censure them than any, even of his bitterest opposers. He constantly defended the integrity of his character and the purity of his motives, but was most willing to acknowledge that none of his works were without spot or blemish before God.

"Concerning almost all my writings, I must confess that my own judgment is, that fewer well studied and polished had been better; but the reader who can safely censure the books, is not fit to censure the author, unless he had been upon the place, and acquainted with all the occasions and circumstances. Indeed, for the 'Saint's Rest,' I had four months' vacancy to write it, but in the midst of continual languishing and medicine: but, for the rest, I wrote them in the crowd of all my other employments, which would allow me no great leisure for polishing and exactness, or any ornament; so that I scarce ever wrote one sheet twice over, nor stayed to make any blots or interlinings, but was fain to let it go as it was first conceived; and when my own desire was rather to stay upon one thing long than run over many, some sudden occasions or other extorted almost all my writings from me; and the apprehensions of present usefulness or necessity prevailed against all other motives: so that the divines which were at hand with me still put me on, and approved of what I did, because they were moved by present necessities, as well as I: but those that were far off, and felt not those nearer motives, did rather wish that I had taken the other way, and published a few elaborate writings; and I am ready myself to be of their mind, when I forgot the case that I then stood in, and have lost the sense of former motives. The opposing of the Anabaptists, Separatists, Quakers, Antinomians, Seekers, &c., were works which then seemed necessary; and so did the debates about church-government and communion, which touched our present practice: but now, all those reasons are past and gone, I could wish I had rather been doing some work of more durable usefulness. But, even to a foreseeing man, who knoweth what will be of longest use, it is hard to discern how far that which is presently needful may be omitted, for the sake of a greater, future good. There are some other

works wherein my heart hath more been set than any of those forementioned, in which I have met with great obstructions: for I must declare, that in this, as in many other matters, we are not the choosers of our own employments, any more than of our own successes.

"And yet, that I may not say worse than it deserveth of my former measure of understanding, I shall truly tell you what change I find now in the perusal of my own writings. Those points which then I thoroughly studied, my judgment is the same of now as it was then, and therefore in the substance of my religion, and in those controversies which I then searched into with some extraordinary diligence, I find not my mind disposed to a change: but in divers points that I studied slightly, and by the halves, and in many things which I took upon trust from others, I have found since that my apprehensions were either erroneous or very lame. And those things which I was orthodox in, I had either insufficient reasons for, or a mixture of some sound and some insufficient ones, or else an insufficient apprehension of those reasons; so that I scarcely knew what I seemed to know: and though in my writings I found little in substance which my present judgment differeth from, yet in my 'Aphorisms' and 'Saint's Rest,' which were my first writings, I find some few unmeet expressions, and one common infirmity. I perceive that I put off matters with some kind of confidence, as if I had done something new or more than ordinary in them, when, upon my more mature reviews, I find that I said not half that which the subject did require. As, *e. g.*, in the doctrine of the covenants and of justification, but especially about the divine authority of the Scripture in the second part of the 'Saint's Rest,' where I have not said half that should have been said; and the reason was, because that I had not read any of the fuller sort of books that are written on those subjects, nor conversed with those that knew more than myself, and so all those things were either new or great to me which were common and small, perhaps, to others; and because they all came in by the way of my own study of the naked matter, and not from books, they were apt to affect my mind the more, and to seem greater than they were. And this token of my weakness so accompanied those my younger studies, that I was very apt to start up controversies in the way of my practical writings, and also more desirous to acquaint the world with all that I took to be the truth, and to assault those books by name which I thought did tend to deceive them, and did contain unsound and dangerous doctrine; and the reason of all this was, that I was then in the vigor of my youthful apprehensions, and the new appearance of any sacred truth, it was more apt to affect me and be more highly valued than afterwards, when commonness

had dulled my delight; and I did not sufficiently discern then how much, in most of our controversies, is verbal, and upon mutual mistakes. And, withal, I knew not how impatient divines were of being contradicted, nor how it would stir up all their powers to defend what they have once said, and to rise up against the truth which is thus thrust upon them as the mortal enemy of their honor: and I knew not how hardly men's minds are changed from their former apprehensions, be the evidence never so plain. And I have perceived that nothing so much hinders the reception of the truth as urging it on men with too harsh importunity, and falling too heavily on their errors: for hereby you engage their honor in the business, and they defend their errors as themselves, and stir up all their wit and ability to oppose you. In controversies, it is fierce opposition which is the bellows to kindle a resisting zeal; when, if they be neglected, and their opinions lie awhile despised, they usually cool and come again to themselves. Men are so loth to be drenched with the truth, that I am no more for going that way to work: and, to confess the truth, I am lately much prone to the contrary extreme, to be too indifferent what men hold, and to keep my judgment to myself, and never to mention any thing wherein I differ from another on any thing which I think I know more than he; or, at least, if he receive it not presently, to silence it, and leave him to his own opinion; and I find this effect is mixed according to its causes, which are some good and some bad. The bad causes are, 1. An impatience of men's weakness, and mistaking forwardness, and self-conceitedness. 2. An abatement of my sensible esteem of truth, through the long abode of them on my mind. Though my judgment value them, yet it is hard to be equally affected with old and common things, as with new and rare ones. The better causes are, 1. That I am much more sensible than ever of the necessity of living upon the principles of religion which we are all agreed in, and uniting in these; and how much mischief men that overvalue their own opinions, have done by their controversies in the church; how some have destroyed charity, and some caused schisms by them, and most have hindered godliness in themselves and others, and used them to divert men from the serious prosecuting of a holy life; and, as Sir Francis Bacon saith in his Essay of Peace, 'that it is one great benefit of church peace and concord, that writing controversies is turned into books of practical devotion for increase of piety and virtue.' 2. And I find that it is much more for most men's good and edification, to converse with them only in that way of godliness which all are agreed in, and not by touching upon differences to stir up their corruptions, and to tell them of little more of your knowledge than what you find them willing to receive from you as mere learners;

and therefore to stay till they crave information of you. We mistake men's diseases when we think there needeth nothing to cure their errors, but only to bring them the evidence of truth. Alas! there are many distempers of mind to be removed, before men are apt to receive that evidence. And, therefore, that, church is happy where order is kept up, and the abilities of the ministers command a reverend submission from the hearers, and where all are in Christ's school in the distinct ranks of teachers and learners; for in a learning way men are ready to receive the truth, but in a disputing way, they come armed against it with prejudice and animosity.

"And I must say, further, that what I last mentioned on the by, is one of the notablest changes of my mind. In my youth, I was quickly past my fundamentals, and was running up into a multitude of controversies, and greatly delighted with metaphysical and scholastic writings, (though, I must needs say, my preaching was still on the necessary points,) but the older I grew, the smaller stress I laid upon these controversies and curiosities, though still my intellect abhorreth confusion, as finding far greater uncertainties in them than I at first discerned, and finding less usefulness comparatively, even where there is the greatest certainty. And now it is the fundamental doctrines of the Catechism which I most highly value, and daily think of, and find most useful to myself and others. The Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments, do find me now the most acceptable and plentiful matter for all my meditations. They are to me as my daily bread and drink; and, as I can speak and write of them over and over again, so I had rather read or hear of them, than of any of the school niceties, which once so much pleased me. And thus I observed it was with old Bishop Usher, and with many other men. And I conjecture that this effect also is mixed of good and bad, according to its causes. The bad cause may, perhaps, be some natural infirmity and decay. And, as trees in the spring shoot up into branches, leaves, and blossoms, but in the autumn the life drains down into the root; so possibly, my nature, conscious of its infirmity and decay, may find itself insufficient to the attempting of difficult things, and so my mind may retire to the root of christian principles, and also, I have often been afraid, lest ill rooting at first, and many temptations afterwards, have made it more necessary for me than many others, to retire to the root and secure my fundamentals. But, upon much observation, I am afraid lest most others are in no better a case.

"The better causes are these: I value all things according to their use and ends, and I find in the daily practice and experience of my soul, that the knowledge of God and Christ, and the Holy Spirit, and the truth of Scripture, and the life to come,

and of a holy life, is of more use to me than all the most curious speculations. I know that every man must grow as trees do, downwards and upwards both at once; and that the roots increase as the bulk and branches do. Being nearer death and another world, I am the more regardful of those things which my everlasting life or death depend on. Having most to do with ignorant, miserable people, I am commanded by my charity and reason to treat with them of that which their salvation lieth on; and not to dispute with them of formalities and niceties, when the question is presently to be determined, whether they shall dwell forever in heaven or in hell. In a word, my meditations must be most upon the matters of my practice and my interest; and as the love of God, and the seeking of everlasting life, is the matter of my practice and my interest, so must it be of my meditation. That is the best doctrine and study which maketh men better, and tendeth to make them happy. I abhor the folly of those unlearned persons, who revile or despise learning, because they know not what it is: and I take not any piece of true learning to be useless; and yet my soul approveth of the resolution of holy Paul, who determined to know nothing among his hearers, that is, comparatively to value and make ostentation of no other wisdom, but the knowledge of a crucified Christ; to know God in Christ is life eternal. As the stock of the tree affordeth timber to build houses and cities, when the small though higher multifarious branches are but to make a crow's nest or a blaze, so the knowledge of God and of Jesus Christ, of heaven and holiness, doth build up the soul to endless blessedness, and affordeth it solid peace and comfort; when a multitude of school niceties serve but for vain janglings and hurtful diversions and contentions, and yet I would not dissuade my reader from the perusal of Aquinas, Scotus, Ockham, Arminiensis, Durandus, or any such writer; for much good may be gotten from them: but I would persuade him to study and live upon the essential doctrines of Christianity and godliness, incomparably above them all. And that he may know that my testimony is somewhat regardable, I presume to say that in this, and as much gainsay my natural inclination to subtilty and accurateness in knowing, as he is like to do by his if he obey my counsel: and I think, if he lived among infidels and enemies of Christ, he would find, that to make good the doctrine of faith and life eternal were not only his noblest and most useful study, but also that which would require the height of all his parts, and the utmost of his diligence, to manage it skilfully to the satisfaction of himself and others.

"I add, therefore, that this is another thing which I am changed in, that whereas in my younger days I never was tempted to doubt of the truth of Scripture or Christianity, but all my doubts

and fears were exercised at home, about my own sincerity and interest in Christ, and this was it which I called unbelief; since then my sorest assaults have been on the other side, and such they were, that had I been void of internal experience and the adhesion of love, and the special help of God, and had not discerned more reason for my religion than I did when I was younger, I had certainly apostatized to infidelity. I am now, therefore, much more apprehensive than heretofore of the necessity of well grounding men in their religion, especially of the witness of the indwelling Spirit; for I more sensibly perceive, that the Spirit is the great witness of Christ and Christianity to the world. And though the folly of fanatics tempted me long to overlook the strength of this testimony of the Spirit, while they placed it in a certain internal assertion, or enthusiastic inspiration; yet now I see that the Holy Ghost, in another manner, is the witness of Christ, and his agent in the world. The Spirit in the prophets was his first witness, and the Spirit by renovation, sanctification, illumination, and consolation, assimilating the soul to Christ and heaven, is the continued witness to all true believers: and if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, the same is none of his. (Rom. viii. 9.) Even as the rational soul in the child is the inherent witness or evidence that he is the child of rational parents. And, therefore, ungodly persons have a great disadvantage in their resisting temptations to unbelief, and it is no wonder if Christ be a stumbling-block to the Jews, and to the Gentiles foolishness. There is many a one that hideth his temptations to infidelity, because he thinketh it a shame to open them, and because it may generate doubts in others; but I doubt, the imperfection of most men's care of their salvation, and of their diligence and resolution in a holy life, doth come from the imperfection of their belief of Christianity and the life to come. For my part, I must profess, that when my belief of things eternal and of the Scripture is most clear and firm, all goeth accordingly in my soul, and all temptations to sinful compliances, worldliness, or flesh-pleasing, do signify worse to me than an invitation to the stocks or Bedlam. And no petition seemeth more necessary to me than,—I believe, help thou my unbelief. Lord, increase our faith.

"Accordingly, I had then a far higher opinion of learned persons and books than I have now; for what I wanted myself, I thought every reverend divine had attained, and was familiarly acquainted with. And what books I understood not, by reason of the strangeness of the terms or matter, I the more admired, and thought that others understood their worth. But now experience hath constrained me against my will to know, that reverend learned men are imperfect, and know but little as well as I, especially those that think themselves the wisest: and the

better I am acquainted with them, the more I perceive that we are all yet in the dark. And the more I am acquainted with holy men, that are all for heaven, and pretend not much to subtleties, the more I value and honor them. And when I have studied hard to understand some abstruse admired book, (as *De Scientia Dei*, *De Providentia circa Malum*, *De Decretis*, *De Prædeterminatione*, *De Libertate Creaturæ*, &c.) I have but attained the knowledge of human imperfection, and to see that the author is but a man as well I.

"And at first I took more upon my author's credit than now I can do: and when an author was highly commended to me by others, or pleased me in some part, I was ready to entertain the whole; whereas now I take and leave in the same author, and dissent in some things from him that I like best, as well as from others.

"At first, I was greatly inclined to go with the highest in controversies on one side or other; as with Dr. Twisse and Mr. Rutherford, and Spanhemius de Providentia et Gratia, &c. But now I can so easily see what to say against both extremes, that I am much more inclinable to reconciling principles. And whereas then I thought that conciliators were but ignorant men, that were willing to please all, and would pretend to reconcile the world by principles which they did not understand themselves, I have since perceived, that if the amiableness of peace and concord had no hand in the business, yet greater light and stronger judgment usually is with the reconcilers, than with either of the contending parties, as with Davenant, Hall, Usher, Lud, Crocius, Bergius, Strangius, Camero, &c. But on both accounts their writings are most acceptable; though I know that moderation may be a pretext of errors.

"At first, the style of authors took as much with me as the argument, and made the arguments seem more forcible, but now I judge not of truth at all by any such ornaments or accidents, but by its naked evidence.

"I am much more cautelous in my belief of history than heretofore. Not that I run into their extreme, that will believe nothing, because they cannot believe all things. But I am abundantly satisfied by the experience of this age, that there is no believing two sorts of men, ungodly men, and partial men, though an honest heathen of no religion may be believed, where enmity against religion biasseth him not; yet a debauched Christian, besides his enmity to the power and practice of his own religion, is seldom without some further bias of interest and faction, especially when these concur; and a man both ungodly and ambitious, espousing an interest contrary to a holy, heavenly life, and also factions, embodying himself with a sect or party suited to his spirit and designs, there is no believing his word or oath. If you read any man partially bitter against others, or

differing from him in opinion, or as cross to his greatness, interest, or designs, take heed how you believe any more than the historical evidence distinct from his word compelleth you to believe. The prodigious lies which have been published in this age in matters of fact with unblushing confidence, even where thousands or multitudes of eye and ear witnesses knew all to be false, do call men to take heed what history they believe, especially where power and violence afford that privilege to the reporter, that no man dare answer him, or detect his fraud, or if they do, their writings are all suppressed. As long as men have liberty to examine and contradict one another, one may partly conjecture by comparing their words, on which side the truth is like to lie. But when great men write history, or flatterers by their appointment, which no man dare contradict, believe it but as you are constrained.

"So in this age there have been such things written against parties and persons whom the writers design to make odious, so notoriously false, as you would think that the sense of their honor, at least, should have made it impossible for such men to write. My own eyes have read such words and actions asserted with most vehement, iterated, unblushing confidence, which abundance of ear-witnesses, even of their own parties, must needs know to have been altogether false; and therefore, having myself now written this history of myself, notwithstanding my protestation, that I have not in any thing wilfully gone against the truth, I expect no more credit from the reader, than the self-condensing light of the matter, with concurrent rational advantages, from persons, and things, and other witnesses, shall constrain him to. If he be a person that is unacquainted with the author himself, and the other evidences of his veracity and credibility, and I have purposely omitted almost all the descriptions of any persons that ever opposed me, or that ever I or my brethren suffered by, because I know that the appearance of interest and partiality might give a fair excuse to the reader's incredulity; except only when I speak of the Cromwellians and Sectaries, where I am the more free, because none suspecteth my interest to have engaged me against them, but with the rest of my brethren I have opposed them in the obedience of my conscience, when by pleasing them I could have had almost any thing that they could have given me; and when beforehand I expected that the present governors should silence me, and deprive me of maintenance, house, and home, as they have done to me and many hundreds more; therefore, I supposed that my description and censures of those persons who would have enriched and honored me, and of their actions against that party which hath silenced, impoverished, and accused me, and which beforehand I expected should do so, are beyond the suspicions of

envy, self-interest, or partiality: if not, I there also am content that the reader exercise his liberty, and believe no worse even of these men, than the evidence of fact constraineth them.

"And though I before told the change of my judgment against provoking writings, I have had more will than skill since to avoid such. I must mention it by way of penitent confession, that I am too much inclined to such words in controversial writings, which are too keen and apt to provoke the person whom I write against. Sometimes I suspect that age soureth my spirits, and sometimes I am apt to think that it is out of a hatred of a flattering humor, which now prevaileth so in the world, that few persons are able to bear the truth; and I am sure that I cannot only bear myself such language as I use to others, but that I expect it. I think all these are partly causes: but I am sure the principal cause is a long custom of studying how to speak and write in the keenest manner to the common, ignorant, and ungodly people; without which keenness to them no sermon or book does much good; which hath so habituated me to it, that I am still falling into the same with others; forgetting that many ministers and professors of strictness do desire the greatest sharpness to the vulgar and to their adversaries, and the greatest lenity, and smoothness and comfort, if not honor, to themselves. I have a strong natural inclination to speak of every subject just as it is, and to call a spade a spade, and *verba rebus apiare;* so as that the thing spoken of may be fullest known by the words; which methinks is part of our speaking truly. But I unfeignedly confess that it is faulty, because imprudent; for that is not a good means which doth harm, because it is not fitted to the end; and because, whilst the readers think me angry, though I feel no passion at such times in myself, it is scandalous and a hinderance to the usefulness of what I write: and especially, because though I feel no anger, yet which is worse, I know that there is some want of honor and love, or tenderness to others; or else I should not be apt to use such words as open their weakness and offend them; and therefore I repent of it, and wish all over sharp passages were expunged from my writings, and desire forgiveness of God and man. And yet I must say, that I am oft afraid of the contrary extreme, lest, when I speak against great and dangerous errors and sins, though of persons otherwise honest, I should encourage men to them, by speaking too easily of them, as Eli did to his sons; and lest I should so favor the person as may befriend the sin and wrong the church. And I must say as the New England synodists: 'We heartily desire, that as much as may be, all expressions and reflections may be forborne that tend to break the bond of love. Indeed, such is our infirmity, that the naked discovery of the fallacy or invalidity of another's allega-

tions or arguings is apt to provoke. This in disputes is unavoidable.'

"And, therefore, I am less for a disputing way than ever, believing that it tempteth men to bend their wits to defend their errors, and oppose the truth, and hindereth usually their information; and the servant of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle to all men, &c. Therefore, I am most in judgment for a learning or teaching way of converse: in all companies, I will be glad either to hear those speak that can teach me, or to be heard of those that have need to learn."[s]

The life and writings of Baxter are now fully and impartially before the reader. The views entertained of them by others, and his own estimate of himself and his works, with the extended details which I have brought forward, leave little to be said in the way of a general summary. My own opinions have been always freely expressed on all the subjects which have passed successively under consideration; and, had I now been disposed to criticise the writings and character of Baxter more minutely, the extracts just given from his own pen must have, in a great measure, deprived me of the power to censure. Though not unconscious of his imperfections, I frankly acknowledge that I have been more disposed to mark his beauties, than to expose his faults; and would rather leave the reader under the impression of his many and great excellencies, than minutely acquainted with his foibles and failings.

Every reader of the preceding part of this work must be struck with the magnitude of Baxter's labors as a writer. The age in which he lived was an age of voluminous authorship; and Baxter was beyond comparison the most voluminous of all his contempoaries. Those who have been accquainted only with what are called his practical or spiritual writings, form no correct estimate of the extent of his works. These form twenty-two volumes octavo, in the present edition; and yet they are but a small portion of what he wrote. The number of his books has been very variously estimated; as some of the volumes which he published contained several distinct treatises, they have sometimes been counted as one, and sometimes reckoned four or five. The best method of forming a correct opinion of Baxter's labors from the press, is by comparing them with some of his brethren, who wrote a great deal. The works of Bishop Hall amount to ten volumes octavo; Lightfoot's extend to thirteen; Jeremy Taylor's to fifteen; Dr. Goodwin's would make about twenty; Dr. Owen's extend to twenty-eight; Richard Baxter's, if printed in a uniform edition, could not be comprised in less

(s) Life, part i. p. 137.

than sixty volumes, making more than from thirty to forty thousand closely-printed octavo pages!

On this mass of writing he was employed from the year 1649, when his first work appeared, till near the time of his death in 1691, a period of forty-four years. Had he been chiefly engaged in writing, this space was amply sufficient to have enabled him to produce all his works with ease. But, it must be recollected that writing was but a small part of his occupation. His labors as a minister, and his engagements in the public business of his times, formed his chief employment for many years, so that he speaks of writing but as a kind of recreation from more severe duties. Nor is this all; his state of health must be taken into consideration, in every estimate of his work. A man more diseased, or who had more to contend with in the frame of his body, probably never existed in the same circumstances. He was a constant martyr to sickness and pain, so that how he found it practicable to write with the composure which he generally did, is one of the greatest mysteries in his history. The energy of his mind was superior to any discouragement, for, though it often felt the burden and clog of the flesh, it never gave way to its desire of ease, or succumbed under the pressure of its infirmities. He furnishes an illustrious instance of what may be done by principle, energy, and perseverance, in the most untoward and discouraging circumstances.

The subjects on which Baxter wrote embrace the whole range of theology, in all the parts of which he seems to have been nearly equally at home. Doctrinal, practical, casuistical, and polemical, all occupied his thoughts, and engaged his pen. His inquiries ranged and his writings extended from the profoundest and most abstruse speculations on the divine decrees, the constitution of man, and the origin of evil, to the simplest truths adapted to the infant mind. To say he was master of any subject, would be too much; but he must be very wise or very stupid to whom Baxter can impart no instruction. If he does not always impart light, he seldom fails to suggest some profitable reflection, or to lead his readers to discover difficulties where they had seen none before. On the most important subjects, he dwells with the greatest delight, expatiating with a freedom which evinces how fully they occupied his own mind, and interesting his readers by the earnestness of his manner and the beauty of his illustrations.

Few men, perhaps, have had greater command of their knowledge, or of the power of conveying it, than Baxter. He appears to have read everything relating to his own profession, and to have remembered all he read. The fathers and schoolmen, the doctors and reformers of all ages and countries, seem to have been as familiar to him as the alphabet of his native tongue

He rarely makes a parade of his knowledge, but he never fails to convince that he was well acquainted with most that had been written on the subject he discusses. His mistakes were seldom the mistakes of ignorance. He labored to derive his knowledge from the fountains of information; and considering that he had not enjoyed the benefits of a university education, the defects of it very rarely appear. Such an education might have given more correctness, but would have added nothing to the vigor of his mind.

Ever alive to the claims of duty, and the calls of Providence, he obeyed with the utmost promptitude every demand made upon him by his brethren, his country, or the state of the church. Perhaps he erred in complying too readily, and using his pen on occasions when a dignified silence would have been more suitable. His own apology, however, on the subject of his many writings, is very satisfactory. With him it was usually matter of conscience to write, and only such an acquaintance with all the circumstances as can now scarcely be had, could enable us to form a correct judgment as to the necessity which he conceived was laid upon him.

When he did write, it was with a pointed pen, which is never chargeable with obscurity or feebleness. The extent of his knowledge and his command of language, betrayed him into exuberance and redundancy. He heaps up arguments, and raises piles of reasons, scarcely knowing when to stop, or what limits to prescribe to a discussion. Though a lover of order, he had no time to arrange or select his thoughts when he sat down to write, so that he poured them forth with all the copiousness of his mind, but often with an irregularity and incongruity that materially injured their beauty and effect. He belabors an adversary till he has destroyed not only his existence but his very form. Not content with disarming him, and using his arms against himself, he seems to take pleasure in having him an object of pity, if not of scorn. His metaphysics and refinements have frequently been referred to. These constituted both his power and his weakness as a controversialist. They enabled him to discover any assailable points in the positions of his adversaries; to penetrate into every crevice, and to lay open every mistake. They at the same time supplied an almost invulnerable protection to himself. He had always ground on which he could retreat with advantage, so that he was frequently left in quiet possession of the field. This style of debate, however, enfeebled the cause, while it appeared to constitute the strength of its advocate. It rarely produced conviction of the truth, but often induced suspicion that error was lurking under the forms and behind the battlements of logic and metaphysics.

The style of Baxter is considerably diversified. It is often

incorrect, rugged, and inharmonious, abounding in parentheses and digressions, and enfeebled by expansion. It is happiest when it is divested entirely of a controversial character, and the subject relates to the great interests of salvation and charity. It then flows with a copiousness and purity to which there is nothing superior in the language in which he wrote. The vigorous conceptions of his mind are then conveyed in a corresponding energy of expression; so that the reader is carried along with a breathless impetuosity, which he finds it impossible to resist. Baxter knew nothing of that vice of learning which Bacon so beautifully describes, as consisting "more in hunting after words than matter; more after the choiceness of the phrase, and the round and clean composition of the sentence, and the sweet falling of the clauses, and the varying and illustration with tropes and figures, than after the weight of matter, worth of subject, soundness of argument, life of invention, or depth of judgment." Baxter was superior to all this. Truth in all its majesty and infinite importance alone occupied the throne of his spirit, and dictated the forms in which its voice should be uttered. And when it spoke, it was in language divinely suited to its nature, never distracting by its turgidness, or disgusting by its regularity. He could be awful or gentle, pathetic or pungent, at pleasure; always suiting his words to his thoughts, and dissolving his audience in tenderness, or overwhelming them with terror, as heaven or hell, the mercies of the Lord, or the wrath to come, was the topic of discourse. It may confidently be affirmed, that from no author of the period could a greater selection of beautiful passages of didactic, hortatory, and consolatory writings, be made.

In the character of Baxter, both as a writer and a public man, there was a marked deficiency of wisdom. Had this been in proportion to his knowledge, his piety, and his fearlessness, he would have been unequalled among the men of his times. But in this respect he often fell far below those who were greatly his inferiors in every other quality of mind and character. His reproofs and expostulations were frequently ill-timed and injudicious, in consequence of which they failed in producing the effect which he was most anxious to accomplish. The same remark is applicable to many of his writings; not his controversial ones only, but even his practical works, displaying frequent marks of want of judgment. This defect did not arise chiefly from the haste with which he composed. In those cases in which he bestowed most labor, we are furnished with the greatest proofs that knowledge and wisdom do not always go together; and in the conduct of great public measures, he was guilty of the greatest blunders.

This feature of his mind fully accounts for that want of con-

sistency which is so remarkable in some parts of his conduct. It did not arise from timidity, from the fear of giving offence, or from the desire of human applause. None of these dispositions had any place in the soul of Baxter. On the contrary, his would have been a smoother and more pleasant part, had he acted decidedly with either of the two great professions, who both claimed him, and both disowned him. From this want of judgment, in the grand struggle for Nonconformity, what he built up with one hand, he pulled down with the other. He first opposed the church, and then turned round and opposed his brethren. He objected to conformity, and yet conformed; he seceded from the establishment, and yet held stated communion with it; he declined a bishopric, and begged for a curacy. He wrote books which made many dissenters, and yet was always angry with those who dissented. He decided where he ought to have hesitated, and hesitated where he should have decided. Possessed of a firmness of character which nothing could subdue, he was yet often turned aside from his purpose for a time by a trifling difficulty, and frequently lost himself in mists of his own creating.

It is a striking fact, that men of extraordinary talents and attainments are frequently marked by the peculiarity which has been adverted to in the case of Baxter—an inaptitude to manage little matters, or to apply their general knowledge to practical purposes. Bacon could lay down laws for the government of the world, both of matter and mind, and yet could not manage with discretion his own servants. Newton could measure and weigh the universe, but in ordinary affairs manifested the simplicity of childhood. In Baxter there was a guileless simplicity of purpose, and a straightforward earnestness in prosecuting it, which prevented his attending to those minor circumstances of manner and method that often completely frustrated the object of his strongest desire. Deceived by the purity of his own principles and aims, he often expected too much from others; and was ill prepared for the reception and opposition which he experienced. Confident in the correctness of his own opinions on some important points, and desirous of inducing all men to embrace them, he over-estimated the strength of principles in others, and moderated the difficulties which obstructed the progress of his schemes. In various respects, he was born before his time; and was therefore imperfectly adapted to the world in which he lived. His schemes of reconciliation, catholic communion, and general philanthropy, which were deemed Utopian by many, have survived the opposition which they then experienced, are no longer regarded as visionary speculation, and are destined to enjoy a still greater measure of approbation in the ages to come.

In the greater number of the practical writings of Baxter, a larger infusion of evangelical doctrine would have added greatly to their interest and effect. The fulness, freeness, and suitableness, of the grace and salvation of the Redeemer to sinners, are rather implied and assumed in his treatises than brought prominently forward or urged. That he understood them well is unquestionable; but his talent lay in dealing with sinners on somewhat different grounds. He had seen much of the abuse of the doctrines of grace, and was in consequence induced to dwell on the dangers of abusing them too frequently, and at too great length. In his system, terms, conditions, and qualifications (a phraseology foreign from the Gospel), frequently occur, embarrassing himself, and stumbling to others. His directions to the sinner, and the weak believer, are not sufficiently simple; they lead rather to the mind itself for comfort, than to the object which alone can relieve it. Faith, repentance, and good works, all of great importance in themselves, are more frequently the subjects of discourse than the person, the atonement, and the glory of the Saviour, as the ground of all hope, and the source of all consolation. In these respects, the writings of Baxter differ considerably from those of Owen, and the men of his school; though no substantial difference of sentiment subsisted between them.

Men equally sincere and enlightened in their attachment to Christianity, view it from different points, and are variously influenced by it. Some are most attracted by its grace, others most influenced by its holiness. The divine goodness and love are consequently the chief subjects of discourse by the former, while the malignity of sin and its hatefulness to God are chiefly dwelt upon by the latter. Both hold the same sentiments respecting the two parts of divine economy, though each dwell on that, which is the principal motive to love and obedience in their respective cases. The experience of Baxter shows, that from the commencement to the close of his religious course, he was chiefly influenced by those views of God which induced hatred of sin, repentance, and self-abasement; and all that is included in the phrase—Godly fear. This led him to say,

> "Fear is to love, as was the law to grace;
> And as John Baptist goes before Christ's face,
> Preaching repentance: it prepares his way.
> It is the first appearing of the day—
> The dawning light which comes before the sun."

What he felt himself to be a great constraining principle, he naturally enough applied to others; and was thus led to dwell more on "the terrors," than the "tender mercies of the Lord."

> "My feeble new-born soul began with crying,
> My infant life did seem to me still dying,

Betwixt supporting hope and sinking fears,
My doubting soul did languish many years." t

This gives an air of sternness and severity to many of his writings, and the appearance of legality, which must not be considered as evidence that he did not understand the Gospel, enjoyed little of its consolation, or imperfectly experienced its sweetening influence. On the contrary, the very poem from which I have extracted his representation of the influence of fear, and which records his experience, is entitled 'Love breathing thanks and praise,' and affords the most delightful illustration of the power of this heavenly principle upon him. He tells us, after dwelling upon his fears,

"At last my fears became my greatest fear,
Lest that my whole religion should lie there.
No man hath more of holiness than love;
Which doth free souls by complacency move.
A slavish fear desireth leave to sin;
It doth but tie the hands and wash the skin.
Hypocrites act a forced, affected part,
Where love is absent, God hath not the heart." u

His pantings after greater measures of holy love and delight in God, were singularly ardent; every paragraph of this poem closing with the beautiful line,

"O my dear God! How precious is thy love!"

Indeed, in all his devotional writings, the predominance of his love to God is apparent; and from the contemplation of the love of God, he derived pure and constant enjoyment.

The natural temper of Baxter was quick and irritable, impatient of contradiction, and prone to severity. This was partly owing to the diseased state of body, from which he endured constant and incredible pain. It appears that he was deeply sensible of this infirmity, and that he labored hard to subdue it. It led him frequently to use harsh and irritating language towards his opponents, which created increased hostility, and gave them an idea that he was an unamiable man, who might be feared or esteemed, but who could not be loved. But if Baxter was easily provoked, he was ever ready to forgive. He was warm, but not irascible. He cherished no resentments, was always happy to accept an explanation or apology, and was as prompt to pardon, as he had been ready to take offence. In the expression of all his feelings, he was open and undisguised. He always spoke from the heart, whether it was filled with indignation, or overflowed with love.

I have literally exhausted all I can say respecting the faults and infirmities of this extraordinary and excellent man. Such

(t) Poetical Fragments, p. 13. (u) Ibid. pp. 14, 15.

as they were, they were obvious on the very surface of his character; while they constitute but a small drawback on the numerous virtues by which it was adorned. In his personal character, the grace of God shone forth with distinguished lustre. The Christian ministry enjoyed in him one of its brightest ornaments, and the Nonconformists one of their ablest defenders and advocates. He died full of years and honor, in the presence of his brethren, and lamented by all good men. He is now enjoying that 'Everlasting Rest,' of which he wrote so well, and for which he prepared so many. No sculptured monument has been reared to his memory, to mark the spot where his ashes repose. He needs it not. His name lives in his works. Among the Christian writers of our country, there is perhaps no individual who occupies so wide a circle, or who fills it with so deserved an influence, as Richard Baxter.

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INDEX.

Act of Uniformity, injustice, impolicy, and cruelty of, i. 206—211. Its effects, 211, 212. Mr. Southey's misstatement of it exposed, 212 *note*. Severe act against private meetings, or conventicles, 221, 222. The Five-mile Act passed, 230. Oath imposed by it, *ib*. Observations on it, 231. Renewal of the conventicle act, 254, 255. The Test Act passed, 268. Act for excluding the Duke of York from the throne carried in the House of Commons, but lost in the House of Lords, 295. The Toleration Act passed, 347.

Adamic curse, on the extent of, ii. 39, and *note*.

Addison's (Joseph) opinion of Baxter, ii. 326.

Alleine's (Joseph) 'Alarm,' character of, ii. 81.

Ames (Dr.), notice of his 'Fresh Suit against Human Ceremonies in God's Worship, i. 25, *notes*. And of his 'Cases of Conscience,' ii. 126, *note* x.

Anabaptists. See *Baptists*.

Anglesey (Earl of), character of, i. 165, *note* r.

Antinomianism, nature of, ii. 228. Its appearance at the Reformation, 229. Originated in Popery, *ib*. Opposed by Luther, 231. Its origin in England, 232. Statement of its principles by Dr. Crisp, *ib*. Opposition of Baxter, 234. Antinomianism, the chief subject of his 'Confession of Faith,' 235. Remarks on it, 237. On Baxter's 'Holiness, the Design of Christianity,' 238. 'Appeal to the Light,' 239. Reply to it, *ib*. 'Treatise of Justifying Righteousness,' *ib*. 'Scripture-Gospel Defended,' 241. Influence of Baxter's writings and preaching on Antinomianism, 242. Observation of Baxter on the conduct and principles of the Antinomians, 100. Leading errors of their system, 243. Antinomianism successfully opposed by the Rev. Andrew Fuller, 245, *note*.

Army, Parliamentary, increased by the accession of the Puritans, i. 36—38. Its state after the battle of Naseby, 46—48. Character of it, 50—53. Various Occurrences in it, after the battle of Langport, 57—60. Causes why Mr. Baxter had so little success in his ministerial labors in it, 60, 61. Remarks on his views of the army, and on his conduct while in it, 65, 66.

Articles of religion, required to be signed by the Toleration Act, Mr. Baxter's opinion of the sense of certain, 347—350.

Ash (Mr. Simeon), biographical notice of, i. 217, 218.

Ashurst (Mr. Henry), benevolence of, during and after the fire of London, i. 234. Biographical account of, 302.

Ashurst (Sir Henry), Biographical notice of, i. 327, *note*. His generous conduct to Mr. Baxter, 322, 324. Extract from a dedication to him, ii. 115.

Assembly of Divines, Mr. Baxter's character of, i. 67, 68. Lord Clarendon's account of it, 68, *note*. Remarks on it, 69. Milton's account of it, *ib*. Remarks on it, 70, *notes*. Comparison of the three characters, 68. Mr. Baxter's account of the leading parties represented in it, 71—79. Remarks thereon, 79, 80.

Bagshaw (Edward), Biographical account of, ii. 178, 179, and *note* q. Notice of his vindication of Mr. Baxter against Bishop Morley, 89. Account of his controversy with Mr. Baxter on church divisions, 176. And of Baxter's replies to him, 177. Character of his treatise, 'De Monarchiâ Absolutâ Politicâ,' 267, *note* m.

Balcarras (Countess of), Biographical account of, ii. 87. 299, *note*. Notice of her son, 88. Baxter's 'Divine Life' undertaken at her request, 299.

Baldwin (Mr. Thomas), successor of Baxter, at Kidderminster, character of, i. 125.

Baptists, or *Anabaptists*, discussions of, with other sects, i. 42. Mr. Baxter's ac-

count of them, 77, 79. Analysis of Mr. Baxter's controversial pieces on baptism, with remarks, ii. 247—253.
Barlow (Bishop), an opponent of Mr. Baxter, notice of, ii. 52.
Barrow's (Dr.) character of Mr. Baxter's writings, ii. 324.
Bastwick (Dr.), notice of, i. 30, *note* m.
Bates (Dr. William), censured by the Nonconformists for his occasional conformity, i. 223. Consults Lord Keeper Bridgman on the construction of the oath required by the Five-mile Act, 232. Which he takes, *ib.* His account of Mr. Baxter's last sickness and death, 353. And of his character and labors, ii. 324.
Battle of Edghill, i. 43. Of Naseby, 46. Of Langport, 54. Of Worcester, 107.
Baxter (Mrs.), step-mother to Mr. Baxter, character of, i. 303. ii. 282.
Baxter (Mrs. Margaret), marriage of to Mr. Baxter, i. 215. Conditions of their marriage, *ib.* Her attention to him during his imprisonment, 250. Instance of her presence of mind, 272, *note* j. Encourages him to submit to warrants of distress, 282, *note* y. Her death, 304. Her attachment to him, *ib.* His character of her, 305. Account of her husband's 'Breviat' of her life, ii. 281.
BAXTER (Richard).
1. Personal Memoirs of Him.—Birth, i. 9. Character of his father, *ib.* His first religious impressions, 10. Education and character of his tutors, 11. Progress of his religious feelings, 13. His escape from gaming during his residence at Ludlow Castle, *ib.* Illness and its effects, 14. Further progress of his education, 14—16. Is troubled with doubt, 17. His consequent distress of mind, 17—20. His diseased habit of body, 20. Goes to court, 21. Remarkable preservation, *ib.* Death of his mother, and character of his mother-in-law, *ib.* His attachment to the ministry, 22. His conformity, 24. Is ordained by Bishop Thornborough, *ib.* Preaches his first sermon at Dudley, 25. Examines the Nonconformist controversy, and adopts some of the principles of Nonconformity, 26. Progress of his mind, *ib.* Residence and labors in Bridgenorth, 27. Effect of the Et-Cætera oath on him, *ib.* Examines the subject of Episcopacy, 28. Is invited to Kidderminster, 31. Removes thither, 32. His account of the state of religion at this time, 33—36. His judgment of the causes of the civil war, 36. His reflections on the character of the opposing parties, 40. Reasons which probably inclined him to the parliamentary cause, 41. Is obliged to quit Kidderminster. *ib.* Goes to Gloucester, 42. Returns to Kidderminster, and is obliged to withdraw, *ib.* Visits Alcester, 43. His residence in Coventry, 44. Opposes the Anabaptists, 45. Consults several ministers about his going into the army, 49. Consents to become chaplain to Colonel Whalley's regiment, *ib.* His cool reception by Cromwell, 50. His opinion of the soldiers, *ib.* He is falsely accused of murdering a man at Langport, 56. His satisfactory vindication of himself, *ib.* His illness at Bristol, 57. His account of various occurrences in the army, 58. He disputes with some sectaries at Agmondesham, 60. Chief impediments to his success in it, *ib.* Goes to London on account of his health, 64. His illness in Worcestershire, *ib.* Quits the army, and is entertained by Lady Rous, 65. Remarks on his views of the army, and on his conduct in it, *ib.* His account of the Westminster assembly, 67. Remarks thereon, 68. His account of the religious parties in England between 1646 and 1656, 71—79. Observations on it, 79, 80. His remarks on various minor sects, 82—91. Observations on it, 91—94. He resumes his labors at Kidderminster, 95. Proofs of his devoted loyalty, 103. Remarks on his conduct towards King Charles I., *ib.* Towards the parliament, 105. And towards the leaders and soldiers of the Commonwealth, *ib.* Account of his ministry and success at Kidderminster, 108—122. Remarks on his style of preaching, and on his public and private exertions, 122. Lasting effects of his labors, 124. Principles on which he acted towards Cromwell, 131. He preaches before the Protector, 133. Interview of Baxter with him, *ib.* He goes to London, 146. Preaches before the parliament, 147. Remarks on his sermon, *ib.*, *note* t. And before the Lord Mayor, *ib.*, and *note* u. Notice of his labors during his second residence at Kidderminster, 150. His extensive correspondence, 151, 155 and *note* e. His efforts to promote the propagation of the Gospel among the American Indians, 151—153. He is appointed one of the king's chaplains, 157, and *note* g. His desire of agreement between the Episcopalians and Presbyterians, *ib.* Interview with the king, and speech to him, 158—160. Observations thereon, 160. Propositions drawn up by Baxter, 162. Character of them, 163. They are presented to the king, *ib.* His observations on the king's declaration, 165. Petition to the king, 166. Further proposals made to the king, and interview with him, 167, 170. Imperfect notions of Baxter on religious liberty, 170, *note*. His sentiments on the altered declaration of the king, *ib.* His account of the king's offer to make some of the Nonconformists bishops, 175. Letter to Lord Clarendon, 177. His modest request for himself, that he might be permitted to remain at Kidderminster, 179. His proceedings

at the Savoy conference, 181. Prepares a reformed liturgy, 183. And exceptions against the national liturgy, *ib.* He endeavors to be restored to Kidderminster, but is frustrated, 194—200. A letter of his intercepted, 200. Preaches in London, 201. Obtains a license from the Archbishop of Canterbury, 202. Unjustly charged with sedition, 203. Attempts, but in vain, to negociate with the vicar of Kidderminster, *ib.* Conduct of Bishop Morley and the Dean of Worcester towards him, 204. Mr. Baxter takes leave of Kidderminster, 205. His reasons for discontinuing his ministry before Bartholomew-day, *ib.* Account of his marriage, 212—215. Narrowly escapes a plot to arrest him, 219. He retires from London to Acton, 224. Works written or published by him between 1661 and 1665, *ib.* His providential escape from assassination, 225. And from a malevolent informer, *ib.* His opinion respecting occasional communion, 226. His reflections on the plague in London, 226. His account of the Five-mile Act, 230. And of the fire of London, 232. Interview of Baxter with the Lord Keeper respecting a comprehension, 240. His reflections on the terms offered, 242. He is complained against for preaching, 243. His character of Lord Chief-Justice Hale, 245. Treatment of Baxter by Dr. Ryves, 247. At whose instigation he is sent to prison, 249. He is advised to apply for a *habeas corpus*, 250. Demands it from the Court of Common Pleas, 251. Behavior of the judges, *ib.* He is released, 252. His benefactors during his imprisonment, 253. Removes to Totteridge, *ib.* His writings between the years 1665 and 1670, *ib.* Remarks on his controversy with Dr. Owen, on the agreement of Christians, 254. Amicable letter of Baxter to Lord Lauderdale, declining the acceptance of preferment in Scotland, 255. His pecuniary loss by the shutting of the Exchequer, 262. Takes out a license to preach, 265. Preaches at Pinner's Hall, and afterwards near Fetter-lane, *ib.* Removes from Totteridge to Bloomsbury, 266. Is requested to draw up new terms of agreement, 269. Healing measure proposed in consequence, which fails in the House of Commons, 270. Providential deliverance from danger while preaching at St. James's market-house, 272. Attempts of informers against him frustrated, 273. His license recalled, 274. Employs an assistant, *ib.* Escapes being imprisoned, *ib.* Engages in another scheme of comprehension, 276. He is harassed by informers, *ib.*—278. Baxter's goods distrained, 281. His reflections on being obliged to part with his library, 283. Various ministerial labors, 284. His controversy with William Penn, *ib., note.* Liberates Mr. Seddon, who had been imprisoned for preaching in his chapel, 285. Various publications between 1670 and 1675, *ib.* His further preaching in London, 286. Is preached against by Dr. Jane, 287. Calumniated by Dr. Mason, 288. Warrant issued against him, and his interview with Bishop Compton, *ib.* Offers his chapel in Oxendon-street to Dr. Lloyd, *ib.* Various slanders against him, 290. His reflections on the times, 296. Remarks thereon, *ib.* Books published by him, between 1676 and 1681, 298. His continued sufferings, 306. Is apprehended, and his goods are distrained, 307. Could obtain no redress, 308. His devout reflections on his sufferings, 309. He is again apprehended and bound to his good behavior, 311. He is brought before the justices, and again bound over, 313. His reflections on the state of his own times, *ib.* Apprehended on a charge of sedition, 317. Copy of his indictment, 318—321. Extracts from his 'Paraphrase on the New Testament,' on which the indictment was founded, 322, *note.* Argument of his counsel, Mr. Pollexfen, 323. Extraordinary behavior of Jefferies to him and to Mr. Baxter, 324. Arguments of his other counsel, Mr. Wallop, 325. Mr. Rotheram, *ib.* Abuse of Baxter by Jefferies, 326. Arguments of Mr. Atwood, *ib.* Jefferies' address to the jury, 327. He is found guilty, *ib.* He endeavors to procure a new trial, or a mitigated sentence, 328. His letter to the Bishop of London, *ib.* He is fined and imprisoned, 329. Remarks on his trial, *ib.* His behavior while in prison, 331. His fine remitted, and he is released, 333. His review of his own life and opinions, and account of his matured sentiments, with remarks thereon, 334—345. His sense of certain articles required to be subscribed by the dissenting ministers under the Toleration Act, 347—350. Notice of his latter years, 351. He preaches for Mr. Sylvester, *ib.* Writings at this time, 352. Account of his last sickness and death, 352—356. Buried at Christ Church, Newgate-street, 356. Devout exordium of his will, *ib.* Notice of his principal bequests, 357. Character given him by his nephew, *ib. note.* Numerous funeral sermons preached for him, 358. Description of his character and person by Mr. Sylvester, *ib.* Of his labors and character by Dr Bates, 359—361. General estimate of his character, talents, and piety, 362—364.

II. Survey of Mr. Baxter's Writings, ii. 9. Observations on the theological literature of the period, 10—13. Chronological list of his works, 345—350. Classification of them, 14.

1. *Works on the Evidences of Religion:*—Design, plan, and execution of his 'Unreasonableness of Infidelity,' ii. 16—21. Of his 'Reasons of the Christian Religion,' and its 'Appendix,' 21—24. And 'More Reasons for the Christian Religion,' 24. Of his treatises 'On the Immortality of Man's Soul, and of the Nature of it and of

other Spirits,' 26—29. Of his 'Certainty of the World of Spirits evinced,' 29—32. Mr. Baxter the first original writer in the English language on the evidences of revealed religion, 32.

2. *Doctrinal Works:*—'Aphorisms on Justification,' ii. 34—40. 'Apology for them, and its opponents, 41—45. 'Confession of Faith,' 45—48. 'Thoughts on Perseverance,' 49. 'Four Disputations of Justification,' 50. 'Treatise of Saving Faith,' 51. 'Treatise of Justifying Righteousness,' 52. 'Two Disputations of Original Sin,' *ib.* 'Catholic Theology,' 54—56. 'Methodus Theologiæ,' 56—60. 'End of Doctrinal Controversies,' 60. General view of his doctrinal sentiments, 62—66. Remarks on his manner of conducting controversy, 66—71.
3. *Works on Conversion:*—His 'Treatise on Conversion,' ii. 72—79. 'Call to the Unconverted,' 79. 'Now or Never,' 80. 'Directions for a sound Conversion,' 82. 'Directions to the Converted,' 83. 'Character of a sound Christian,' 84. 'Mischiefs of Self-Ignorance,' 86. 'A Saint or a Brute,' 91. Various smaller treatises, 93. Observations on this class of Baxter's writings, 94.
4. *Works on Christian Experience:*—'Right Method for settled Peace of Conscience,' ii. 96—99. 'The Crucifying of the World,' 100. 'Treatise on Self-Denial, 104. 'Obedient Patience,' 108. 'Life of Faith,' 109. 'Sermon on Faith,' 111. 'Knowledge and Love compared,' 112. 'God's Goodness Vindicated,' 116. Various Discourses, 117. 'Cure of Melancholy,' *ib.*
5. *Works on Christian Ethics:*—'Christian Directory,' ii. 121—135. 'Gildas Salvianus, or the Reformed Pastor,' 135—140. 'Reasons for Ministers using Plainness,' 140. 'The Poor Man's Family Book,' 140. 'Catechising of Families,' 142. 'The Mother's Catechism,' 143. 'Sheets for the Poor and Afflicted,' 144. 'Directions to Justices of the Peace,' *ib.* 'How to do Good to Many.' 145. 'Compassionate Counsel to Young Men,' 147. 'Divine Appointment of the Lord's Day,' *ib.* General remarks on Mr. Baxter's ethical writings, 151.
6. *Works on Catholic Communion:*—'Christian Concord, or Agreement of the Associated Pastors and Churches of Worcestershire,' ii. 156. 'Agreement of divers Ministers for Catechising,' 159. 'Disputations of Right to Sacraments,' 160. Notice of a Reply to it, 162. 'Confirmation and Restauration,' 163. 'Five Dissertations of Church Government,' 165. 'Judgment concerning Mr. Dury,' 168. Universal Concord,' 169. 'The True Catholic, and Catholic Church Described,' 172. 'Cure for Church Divisions,' *ib.* 'Defence of the Principles of Love,' 175. 'Second Admonition to Bagshaw,' 177. 'The Church told of Mr. Edward Bagshaw's Scandal,' *ib.* 'True and Only Way of Concord,' 180. 'Catholic Communion Defended,' 181. 'Judgment of Sir Matthew Hale on the Nature of True Religion,' 185. 'Sense of the Subscribed Articles of the Church of England,' *ib.* 'Church Concord,' *ib.* Treatise 'Of National Churches,' 186. 'Moral Prognostication,' *ib.* Summary View of Mr. Baxter's opinions on Catholic Communion and Church Government, *ib.*
7. *Works on Nonconformity:*—'Account of the Proceedings at the Savoy Conference.' ii. 194. 'Sacrilegious Desertion of the Ministry Rebuked,' 195. Notice of Dr. Fullwood's reply to it, 196. 'The Judgment of the Nonconformists concerning the Office of Reason in Religion,' *ib.* 'Difference between Grace and Morality,' *ib.* 'About Things Indifferent,' *ib.* 'And Sinful,' *ib.* 'What Mere Nonconformity is not,' *ib.* Remarks on these treatises, 197. 'The Nonconformist's Plea for Peace,' 198. Reply to it by Mr. Cheney, 200. 'Second Part of the Plea,' *ib.* 'Defence' of it, *ib.* Account of Stillingfleet's attack upon it, 201. Reply of Mr. Baxter to his charge of separation, 203. Rejoinder of Stillingfleet, 204. Baxter's 'Second Defence,' 205. Further answer to Stillingfleet, 206. 'Search after English Schismatics,' 207. 'Treatise of English Episcopacy,' 208. 'Apology for the Nonconformists' Ministry,' 209. 'English Nonconformity Truly Stated,' 210. Observations on the various Treatises on Nonconformity, *ib.*
8. *Works on Popery:*—'The Safe Religion,' ii. 213. 'Winding-Sheet for Popery,' *ib.* 'Grotian Religion Discovered,' 214. Controversy it produced with Pierce, Womack, Heylin, and Bramhall, 216. 'Key for Catholics,' 218. 'Successive Visibility of the Church,' 219. Controversy with Johnson respecting it, *ib.* 'Fair Warning, or Twenty-five Reasons against Toleration of Popery, 220. 'Difference between the Power of Church Pastors and the Roman Kingdom,' *ib.* 'Certainty of Christianity without Popery,' 221. 'Full and Easy Satisfaction which is the True Religion,' 222. 'Christ, not the Pope, the Head of the Church,' 223. 'Roman Tradition Examined,' *ib.* 'Naked Popery,' *ib.* Controversy with Hutchinson respecting it, 224. 'Which is the True Church?' *ib.* Controversy with Dodwell respecting it, *ib.* 'Dissent from Dr. Sherlock,' 225. Answer to Dodwell's letter, calling for more Answers, *ib.* 'Against Revolt to a Foreign Jurisdiction,' 226. 'The Protestant Religion Truly Stated and Justified,' *ib.* His prayer for deliverance from Popery, 227.

9. *Works on Antinomianism:*—Baxter's early hostility to it, ii. 234. The chief subject of his 'Confession of Faith,' *ib.* 'How far Holiness is the Design of Christianity,' 237. 'Appeal to the Light,' 239. Notice of a reply to it, *ib.* 'Treatise of Justifying Righteousness,' *ib.* 'Scripture Gospel Defended,' 241. Influence of Baxter's writings and preaching on Antinomianism, 241—246.

10. *Works on Baptism, Quakerism, and Millenarianism:*—Controversy with Tombes on Baptism, ii. 247. 'Plain Proofs of Infant Baptism, 249. Its success, 251. Reply to it by Tombes, *ib.* Baxter publishes his 'More Proofs of Infants' Church Membership,' 252. His Controversy with Danvers, *ib.* 'Review of the State of Christian Infants,' 253. Remarks on this Controversy, *ib.* Conduct of the Quakers, and controversy of Baxter with them, 254. 'The Worcestershire Petition to Parliament,' 255. The 'Petition Defended,' 256. 'The Quaker's Catechism,' 257. Single sheets against Quakerism, 258. Controversy with Beverly on the Millennium, 260. 'The Glorious Kingdom of Christ described,' 262. Answered by Beverley, 264. 'Reply' of Baxter, *ib.*

11. *Political and Historical Works:*—'Humble Advice,' ii. 266 'Holy Commonwealth,' *ib.* Occasion of it, *ib.* Analysis of it, 268. His opinion on resistance to illegal governments, and of the causes of the civil war, 269—272. The publication of this work the reason why Baxter was not permitted to preach in the diocese of Worcester, 272. Notice of various attacks upon the 'Holy Commonwealth,' *ib.* He recalls this work, 274. His motives for doing so, *ib.* Remarks thereon, 275. Analysis of his 'Church History of the Government of Bishops and their Councils Abbreviated,' 276. It is attacked by Morrice, 279. Baxter's 'True History of Councils Enlarged and Defended,' *ib.* Extract from it, *ib.* Account of his 'Breviat of the Life of Mrs. Baxter,' 281. His 'Penitent Confession,' 283. Conduct of Long towards him, 284. Character of his 'Reliquæ Baxterianæ,' 286. Imperfectly edited by Sylvester, *ib.* Dr. Calamy's account of it, and of its reception, 288. Notice of his abridgement and continuation of it, and of the controversy to which it led, 290.

12. *Devotional Works:*—'Saint's Everlasting Rest,' written for his own use during sickness, ii. 293. And in six months, *ib.* His reasons for omitting the names of Lord Brook, Hampden and Pym, in the later editions, 294. Description, character, and usefulness of this work, 296. It is attacked by Firman, *ib.* Baxter's 'Answer to his Exceptions,' 297. His 'Divine Life' occasioned by a request of the Countess of Balcarras, 299. Its object and excellency, *ib.* Notice of his 'Funeral Sermons,' 'Treatise of Death,' and 'Dying Thoughts,' 302, 304. Character of his 'Reformed Liturgy,' 304. Origin and object of his 'Paraphrase on the New Testament,' 305. His reasons for not attempting an exposition of the book of Revelations, 307. Notice of his 'Monthly Preparations for the Holy Communion,' 308. Mr. Montgomery's character of Baxter as a Christian poet, *ib.* Account of his 'Poetical Fragments,' 309. And 'Additions' to them, *ib.* 'Paraphrase on the Psalms,' *ib.* His observations on the qualifications of a poet, 310. Specimens of his poetry, with remarks thereon, 311—315.

13. *Miscellaneous Writings:*—Notices of Mr. Baxter's prefaces to the works of others, ii. 317, 318. And of various treatises in manuscript left by him, *ib.* His extensive correspondence, 319. Letter to Increase Mather, 320. His account of his transactions with his booksellers, 321. Concurrence of opinions respecting him as a writer, 323. His own candid and faithful review of his writings, 328—338. Number and variety of his works, 337, 338. Facility with which he wrote, 339. Character of his style, 340. Sometimes injudicious both in his writings and his conduct, 341. Deficient in the full statement of evangelical doctrine, 342. Causes of it, 343.

Baxter (William), principal legatee of Mr. Baxter, biographical notice of, ii. 354. His character of his uncle, *ib. note.*

Behmenists, Mr. Baxter's account of the tenets of, and their principal followers in England, i. 87. Observations on the writings of Behmen, 88, *note* y.

Berry (Colonel James), Mr. Baxter's character of, i. 62. Remarks thereon, 63, *note.* Extract from a dedication to him, ii. 105.

Beverley, (Rev. Thomas), account of the Millenarian tenets of, ii. 260. Publishes his 'Millenary Catechism,' 261. Questions addressed to him by Baxter, *ib.* Who publishes his 'Glorious Kingdom of Christ Described,' against him, 262. Extract from it, 263. Notice of Beverley's answer, and Baxter's 'Reply,' 264. And of Beverley's rejoinder, *ib.*

Bishoprics offered by Charles II. to certain Nonconformist ministers, i. 175, 176. One of them declined by Baxter, 179. The bishopric of Norwich accepted by Reynolds, *ib.* Remarks on the proceedings, 180.

Bishops, conduct of, at the Savoy Conference, i. 181—189. Remarks thereon, 189. Baxter's account of those who attended, *ib.* Remarks on the whole proceeding, 192. Alterations proposed by the episcopal commissioners in the Book of Common Prayer, 193, *note* h. Several of them advise Charles II. to recall the Nonconform-

ists' licenses to preach, 273. Account of the proceedings on the Bishops' Test Act, 279—281.
Blake (Mr.), an opponent of Mr. Baxter, notice of, ii. 50, *note* f.
Blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, observations on, ii. 20.
Booksellers, Mr. Baxter's account of his transactions with, ii. 321—324.
Boyle's (Hon. Robert) character of Mr. Baxter, ii. 324.
Boyle (Rodger). See *Broghill*.
Bramhall's (Bishop) Vindication of himself from the charge of Popery, notice of, ii. 226. Baxter's opinion of this work, *ib.*
Bridges (Colonel), Biographical notice of, ii. 93. Extract of a dedication to him, *ib.*
Bridgman (Sir Orlando), Lord Keeper, biographical notice of, i. 232, *note* a. His construction of the Five-Mile Act, *ib.* Resigns the great seal, 263.
Brodie's History of England, character of, i. 104.
Broghill (Roger Boyle, Baron of, afterwards Earl of Orrery), character of i. 157, *note* i, 269, *note* d. Requests Mr. Baxter to draw up new terms of agreement, 269. His treatise on the 'Unreasonableness of Infidelity,' dedicated to him, ii. 16.
Brook (Robert Greville, Lord), biographical notice of, ii. 295.
Buckingham (George Villiers, Duke of), character of, i. 238 and *note* i. His conduct towards the Nonconformists, 239.
Bunny's (Edmund) 'Resolution,' notice of, i. 12 and *note*.
Burgess (Anthony), an opponent of Mr. Baxter, notice of, ii. 36, 50, *note* g.
Burnet's (Gilbert, Bishop of Salisbury) character of Sir Matthew Hale, i. 247, *note* a. His evidence against the Duke of Lauderdale, 278. Remarks on a dedication of his, to the duke, *ib.*, *note* p. His testimony to Mr. Baxter's writings, *ib. note*.
Burton (Henry), notice of, i. 30, *note* l.
Burton (Dr. Hezekiah), notice of, i. 241, *note* n.
Bushby (Mr.), master of Westminster School, anecdotes of, ii. 179, *notes*.

Calamy (Dr.) declines a bishopric, i. 180. Remarks on his conduct, *ib.*, *note* o. His account of Baxter's 'Reliquiæ,' or Narrative of his Life and Times, ii. 283—290. Character of his Abridgement and Continuation of that work, 290. Its reception, 291. Controversy to which it gave rise, *ib.*
Calderwood's (David) *Altare Damascenum*, notice of, i. 28, *note*.
'Call to the Unconverted,' plan of, ii. 79. Mr. Baxter's account of its effects. *ib.*, 80. Comparison of it, with Mr. Law's 'Serious Call,' 81. And with Allcine's 'Alarm,' *ib.*
Calvin's Institutions, character of, ii. 124.
Campbell's (Dr.) 'Treatise on Miracles' recommended, ii. 17, *note* g.
Cartwright (Christopher), an opponent of Mr. Baxter, notice of, ii. 36, 52.
Casuists of the Romish Church, observations on, ii. 124. Paucity of casuistical books among the reformed churches accounted for, 127, *note*.
Catechising, Mr. Baxter's Method of, i. 111. Analysis of his treatise on the 'The Catechising of Families,' ii. 142. And of his 'Mother's Catechism,' 143. His account of his practice in catechising, 159.
'Catholic Theology,' title of Mr. Baxter's treatise so called, ii. 54. His design in it, *ib.* Remarks on it, 55.
Catholic Communion, observations on Mr. Baxter's efforts to promote it, ii. 154. And on his several treatises on this subject, 155—186. Observations upon his sentiments on this subject, 186. And on his efforts to promote it, 170.
Charles I., conduct of, at the commencement of the civil war, i. 36. By whom supported, 37. Strongly marked difference between his supporters and his antagonists, *ib.* Mr. Baxter's account of public affairs during his reign, from 1646 till his death, with remarks thereon, 97—108. Remarks on a passage in the 'Eikon Basilike,' ascribed to him, 163, *note* a.
Charles II., defeat of, at the battle of Worcester, i. 107. His flight, *ib.* Account of his restoration, 144—146. His arrival in London, 147. Base hypocrisy of, exposed, 148, *note* x. Intoxication of the people at his return, *ib.*, *note* y. Remarks on the circumstances of his restoration, 148. Views of the Nonconformists respecting him, 156. His conduct towards them, *ib.* Interview of Baxter and several ministers with him, 157. Remarks thereon, 160. He requires the ministers to draw up proposals respecting church government, 161. Their paper presented to him, 162. His reply to them, 163. Meeting of the ministers with Charles, to hear the declaration, 164. Petition against it, 166. Charles alters his declaration, 167—171. He offers bishoprics to Baxter, Calamy, and Reynolds, 175. He has a private interview with Baxter, 180. Issues a commission for the Savoy Conference, 181. And his declaration for liberty of conscience, 216. His conduct towards Lord Clarendon, 238, *note* h. An address presented him by the Nonconformist ministers, 243. He shuts up his Exchequer, 262. Its consequences, *ib.* Issues his dispensing declaration, 263. Which the Parliament votes to be illegal, 265. Prorogues Parliament, 268. Commands the persecution of the Nonconformists, 286. His death and character, 314, and *note*.

Charlton (Miss Margaret), Biographical notice of, i. 213. Her marriage to Mr. Baxter, 215.
Cheney's (Mr.) 'Conforming Nonconformist,' notice of, ii. 200. And of Baxter's reply to it, *ib.*
'*Christian Directory*,' Baxter's account of, ii. 126. Remarks on its arrangement, 129. Opposed to the politics of Hooker, 130. Remarks on the notion of passive obedisive obedience in this treatise, 131. General character of the work, 133. Comparison of it with the 'Ductor Dubitantium' of Bishop Taylor, *ib.* Defects and excellencies of the 'Christian Directory,' 134.
Christian experience, observations on, and on abuses and mistakes respecting it, ii. 96.
Christian fellowship, Mr. Baxter's sentiments concerning, ii. 160. Remarks thereon, 161.
Christians (early), observations on the union of, ii. 152. Causes of separation among them, 153. Observations on the means of effecting their re-union, *ib.*
Church communion, observations on Mr. Baxter's sentiments respecting, ii. 187.
'*Church Divisions*,' account of Mr. Baxter's 'Cure' for, ii. 174. Its reception, 176. Attacked by Mr. Bagshaw, 177. Mr. Baxter's replies to him, *ib.*
Church Government, account of Mr. Baxter's 'Five Dissertations' on, ii. 165. Extract from his dedication of them to Richard Cromwell, 167. Remarks thereon, *ib.*
'*Church History* of the Government of Bishops,' design of Mr. Baxter's treatise on, ii. 276. His reasons for undertaking this work, 277. Outline of it, 278. Attacked by Morrice, 279. And defended by Baxter, *ib.*
Churches, national, Mr. Baxter's opinion on, ii. 186. Analysis of his 'True and only Way of Concord of all Christian Churches,' 180. And of his "Moral Prognostication,' respecting the future state of churches by the restitution of primitive piety, purity, and charity, 186.
Civil War, state of religion in England, before and at the commencement of, i. 33—36. Its causes, 36. Character of the parties engaged in it, *ib.* Reasons assigned for it, by both parties, 39. Remarks thereon, *ib.* Mr. Baxter's judgment on this subject, 40.
Clare (Sir Ralph), biographical notice of, i. 195, *note*. Account of his successful opposition to Mr. Baxter's return to Kidderminster, 194—197.
Clarendon (Edward Hyde, Earl of), character of, i. 167, *note* z. His character of the Westminster assembly, 68, *note*. Remarks on it, *ib.* His account of the conduct of the Nonconformists, 171. Exposure of its unfairness and inaccuracy, 172. Letter of Baxter to him, 177. His letter, recommending Mr. Baxter to be fixed at Kidderminster, 197. Observations on his conduct, 198. Promotes the passing of the Five-Mile Act, 230. His fall, and remarks thereon, 237, *note* h. 238.
Clarkson's (David) publications on episcopacy, notice of, i. 231, and *note* e.
Coleman, a Papist, execution of, for treason, i. 293, and *note* y.
Common Prayer-Book, exceptions of the Nonconformists against, i. 183. Proceedings thereon, 187. Alterations proposed therein by the episcopal commissioners at the Savoy Conference, 192, *note* h, 193.
Communicants, number of, at Kidderminster, i. 112.
Communion, occasional, Baxter's opinion on, i. 226.
Comprehension, account of the discussions concerning, with Lord Keeper Bridgman, i. 240. A bill proposed for it, frustrated by Bishop Ward, 242. A second scheme of comprehension proposed, 275.
Compton, (Dr. Henry), Bishop of London, notice of, i. 289, *note* h. Interview of Baxter with him, *ib.*
Conference, at the Savoy, account of, i. 181—192. Observations on it, 192.
'*Confirmation and Restauration*,' analysis of Mr. Baxter's treatise on, ii. 163. His account of the mode in which confirmation was once administered in England, 164, *note* x.
Conformist clergy, labors of, after the fire of London, i. 235. Observations on the published writings of some of them, 236.
Conventicle Act, passed, i. 221. Sufferings of the people in consequence of it, 223. Renewal of the act, 254.
Conversion, analysis, with remarks on Mr. Baxter's various publications on; 'Treatise on Conversion,' ii. 73—79. 'Call to the Unconverted,' 79. 'Now or Never,' 80. 'Directions for a Sound Conversion,' 81. 'Directions to the Converted,' 83. Importance of this division of Mr. Baxter's works, 72—74. General remarks on them, 96.
Convocation of 1661, notice of, i. 183.
Corbet (Rev. John), biographical account of, i. 300—303.
Corporation Act, observation on the repeal of, i. 226.
Correspondence, extensive, of Mr. Baxter, ii. 319.
Coventry, notice of Mr. Baxter's residence at, i. 44. Character of his hearers there, 45.

Covenant, taken by Mr. Baxter, of which he afterwards repented, i. 45. He opposes the taking of it in Kidderminster, 105.
Cradock (Walter), a Nonconformist minister, notice of i. 23, *note* o.
Crandon (John), an opponent of Mr. Baxter, notice of, ii. 41.
Creighton (Dr.), anecdote of, i. 243.
Crew (Dr.), Bishop of Durham, anecdotes and character of, i. 239, and *note* l.
Crisp (Dr.), biographical notice of, ii. 232, 233. Account of his Antinomian sentiments, *ib.* They are opposed by Baxter, 234. Republication of his works by his son, 240. Account of the controversy which ensued, *ib.*
Croft's (Bishop of Hereford), 'Naked Truth,' notice of, and of the controversy to which it gave rise, ii. 223, *notes.*
Cromwell (Oliver) invites Mr. Baxter to become his chaplain, but is refused, i. 43. His cool reception of Mr. Baxter, 50. Mr. Baxter's character of Cromwell, 61. His treatment of the Parliament, 127—130. Institutes a committee of triers, 130. And a committee to report of fundamentals, 131. Baxter's conduct towards him, 132. Account of his preaching before Cromwell, 133. His interview with the latter, 134. Admission of the benefits of his government, 135. Mr. Baxter's character of him, 136. Remarks thereon, 140.
Cromwell (Richard), succession of, to the Protectorate, and his subsequent retirement, i. 142. Remarks thereon, 143. Extract from a dedication of Mr. Baxter's to him, ii. 167. Observations on it, *ib.*
'*Crucifying of the World by the Cross of Christ*,' plan of this treatise, ii. 100. Comparison of it with Maclaurin's sermon on the same subject, *ib.* Fine passage quoted from it, 102—104.
'*Cure of Melancholy*,' observations on, ii. 117—120.

Danby (Sir Thomas Osborne, Earl of, and Lord Treasurer), character of, i. 269, *note* c. Attacked by Parliament, 279. Impeachment of, for high treason, 293. His subsequent history, *ib.*, *note* z.
Dance (Mr.), Vicar of Kidderminster, character of, i. 31. And of his preaching, 195. Allows a lecturer to be chosen by his parishioners, *ib.* Baxter solicits preferment for him, 179. Failure of his application, 197.
Danvers (Mr.), biographical notice of, ii. 252. His controversy with Baxter, on baptism, and Baxter's reply, *ib.*
Daventry, origin of the dissenting congregation at, ii. 142.
Davis (Sir Thomas), a city magistrate, conduct of, towards Baxter, i. 276—278.
Declension (religious), instance of the progress of, i. 13.
Dickson (David), biographical notice of, ii. 127, *note.*
'*Directions to a Sound Conversion*,' analysis of, ii. 31. And to the converted, 33.
Discipline, account of Mr. Baxter's meetings for, i. 110. His exercise of church discipline, 118. Want of discipline in the established Church, *ib. note.*
Dispensing, declaration issued by Charles II., i. 263. Remarks on its design, *ib.* Proceedings of the Nonconformists in relation to it, *ib.* It is voted to be illegal by Parliament, 266.
Dissenters, zeal of, against Popery, ii. 227. See *Nonconformists.*
Distress, spiritual, remarks on, i. 18. Account of Mr. Baxter's distress, 17.
'*Divine Life*,' treatise on, written at the request of the Countess of Balcarras, ii. 299. Its object and excellency, *ib.*
Doctrinal Controversies, analysis of Mr. Baxter's treatise on the end of, ii. 60. Observations on his doctrinal sentiments, 62, and on his mode of conducting doctrinal controversies, 66—71.
Doddridge's (Dr.) recommendation of the 'Reformed Pastor,' ii. 139. His character of Mr. Baxter's writings, 324.
Dodwell (Henry), account of, and of his tenets, ii. 224. Baxter's Controversy with him, 225. Their correspondence, 226, *note.* Tillotson's opinion of both of them, 225, *note.*
Dunstan's (St.) Church, accident at, during Mr. Baxter's preaching there, i. 201, and *note* n.
Dury (Mr. John), account of his endeavors to promote ecclesiastical peace, ii. 168.
'*Dying Thoughts*' of Mr. Baxter, character of, ii. 303; and of Mr. Fawcett's abridgment of them, 304, *note.*

Ecclesiastical History, difficulty of writing, ii. 276.
Edghill, battle of, i. 43.
Education, importance of, especially of academical education, i. 16. Account of Mr. Baxter's education, 11—15.
Edwards' (Thomas) 'Baxterianism Barefaced,' notice of, ii. 67; and of himself, *ib. note.*
Election, Mr. Baxter's sentiments on, ii. 62.
Elliot's (Mr.) efforts to propagate the gospel among the American Indians, promoted

by Baxter, i. 151. Success of his labors, 152. Extract of a letter from Baxter to him, *ib.*
England, state of religion in, before and at the commencement of the civil wars, i, 33—36.
Episcopalians, Mr. Baxter's account of the tenets of, i. 71. A limited episcopacy, pleaded for by him and by others, *ib.* Account of his 'Treatise of Episcopacy,' ii. 208. Anecdote of their rejecting a toleration from Cromwell, 281, *note* f.
Erastians, tenets of, i. 70; and *note* d, 71.
Erskine (Mr.), observations of, on the characteristic features of the writings of the Puritans and Nonconformists, ii. 12.
Et-cætera oath, nature and effect of, i. 27.
Evidences of Religion, Mr. Baxter's plan in studying and writing on, ii. 14,15. Mr. Baxter the earliest original English writer on the Evidences of Revealed Religion, 32. Analysis of his various treatises on, with remarks, 16—32.
Exchequer shut by Charles II., i. 262. Its consequences, *ib.*
Exclusion-Bill passed in the House of Commons, but lost in the House of Lords, i. 295,296.
Eyre (William), an opponent of Mr. Baxter, notice of, ii. 41.

Faith:—Mr. Baxter's sentiments on justifying faith, ii. 65. Account of his 'Life of Faith,' 109—111. Notice of his sermon on Faith, 111.
Fawcett's (Benjamin) Abridgement of Baxter's 'Saint's Rest,' character of, ii. 293; and of his 'Dying Thoughts,' 304, *note* o.
Fetter-Lane, historical notice of the Dissenting Congregation in, i. 266, *note* a.
Fifth-Monarchy Men, account of the insurrection of, i. 200.
Finch (Sir Heneage), notice of, i. 273, *note*.
Fire of London, in 1666, account of, i. 232. Benevolent efforts made to relieve the inhabitants, 234. The fire favorable to the labors of the Nonconformist Ministers, 235. Preaching of the Conformist Clergy, 237.
Firmin (Giles) attacks the 'Saint's Rest,' ii. 299. Notice of Mr. Baxter's reply to him, *ib.*
Fisher (Samuel,) notice of the 'Rustic's Alarm to the Rabbies,' by, ii. 259. Account of him, *ib.*
Five-Mile Act passed, i. 230. Oath imposed by it, *ib.* It is rigorously enforced, 231. Sir Orlando Bridgman's construction of it, *ib.* Observations on it, 231.
Foley (Thomas, esq.,) Biographical notice of, ii. 100.
Fotherby's (Bishop) 'Atheomastix,' notice of, ii, 32.
Fountain (Mr. Serjeant,) Biographical notice of, i. 260, *note* l. His kindness to Mr. Baxter, 251, 253. His interesting character of Fountain, 259.
Fowler (Dr. Edward,) bishop of Gloucester, notice of, ii. 237. Account of his 'Design of Christianity,' *ib.*
Fox's (Mr.) notice of the treatment of the Dissenters, and of the trial of Baxter, i. 315. Remarks thereon, 316.
Freedom of the will, Mr. Baxter's sentiments on, ii. 65.
Frewen (Dr.,) archbishop of York, conduct of, at the Savoy Conference, i. 181, 189.
Fuller (Rev. Andrew,) writings of, against Antinomianism, ii. 245, *note*.
Fundamentals of religion, remarks on the committee for, i. 131.
'*Funeral Sermons*,' notice of various, published by Mr. Baxter, ii. 302.

Gauden (Dr.,) conduct of, at the Savoy Conference, i. 190, and *note* a.
Gayer (Sir John,) determination upon the will of, i. 310, *note*.
Gell (Dr.,) notice of the tenets of, i. 88, and *note* a.
Gibbon (Dr. Nicholas,) account of, i. 89, *note* c.
'*Gildas Salvianus*, or the Reformed Pastor,' analysis of, with remarks, ii, 135—140.
Gillespie (George,) his account of Erastianism, i. 71, *note*.
Glanvil's (Joseph) 'Sadducismus Triumphatus,' notice of, ii. 28. His correspondence with Mr. Baxter, *ib.* And offer to vindicate him against the attacks of Bishop Morley, 89.
Gloucester, anecdote of the siege of, i. 300, *note* l.
'*God's Goodness Vindicated*,' remarks on this treatise, ii. 116.
Godfrey (Sir Edmondbury,) death of, i. 292, and *note* u.
Godwin's History of the Commonwealth, character of, i. 104.
Good, doing to many, account of Mr. Baxter's directions for, ii. 145, 147.
Gospel, observations on the Spirit's testimony to, ii. 19.
Goring (Lord,) defeat of, at the battle of Langport, i. 54.
Gouge (Rev. Thomas,) benevolent labors of, after the fire of London, i. 234. Biographical account of him, 301.
Gough (General,) anecdote of, ii. 45.
Grainger's (Mr.,) character of Mr. Baxter, ii. 326, 327.
Greville. See *Brook* (Lord.)

Grigg (Thos.,) chaplain to the Bishop of London, Mr. Baxter's account of his refusing to license one of his treatises, ii. 35.
Grotius, character of, ii. 214. Vindication of him by Dr. Peirce, *ib.* Lord Lauderdale's opinion of Grotius, 215, *note* c.

Hale (Sir Matthew,) Lord Chief Justice, Mr. Baxter's character of, i. 245. Confirmation of it, by Bishop Burnet, 247, *note* a. Notice of his death, 299. And of his 'Judgment on the Nature of True Religion,' &c., ii. 185.
Hall (Rev. Robert,) observations of on the means of effecting a re-union among Christians, ii. 153. Character of his publications on Christian communion, 154, *note*.
Hampden (John,) character of, ii. 294.
Harrington's (James) 'Oceana,' character of, ii. 267, *note* g.
Harrison (Major-General,) character of, i. 56, *note*.
Henry (Rev. Matthew,) account of his interview with Mr. Baxter, in private, i. 332.
Herbert's (Lord) treatise *de Veritate*, account of Mr. Baxter's reply to, ii. 24.
Heylin (Dr. Peter,) controversy of, with Baxter, ii. 216. Proof of his leaning towards Popery, 217. Notice of a 'Review of his Certamen Epistolare,' *ib.*, *note*.
Hinchman (Dr. bishop of London,) character of, i. 190.
Hoadly's (Benjamin) 'Reasonableness of Conformity,' and Calamy's reply to him, notice of, ii. 292.
Hobbes's 'Leviathan,' character of, ii. 266, *note* d.
Hollis (Denzil, Lord,) character of, i. 165, *note* s.
'*Holy Commonwealth*, or Political Aphorisms' of Baxter, origin and design of, ii. 266—269. Remarks on it, 269. Political principles which it avows, 270—272. Notice of various attacks upon it, *ib.* He recals it, 273. Reasons for so doing, 274. Observations thereon, *ib.*
Holy Ghost, observations on the blasphemy of, ii. 20.
Hooke's (Dr. Richard) 'Nonconformist Champion,' notice of, ii. 207.
Hooker's Ecclesiastical Polity, character of, i. 22. His view of government opposed by Baxter, 119, 130.
Hungarian Protestant Ministers, case of, i. 294. Oppression of the Protestants in Hungary, *ib.*, *note* b.
Hutchinson's 'Catholic Naked Truth,' notice of, ii. 223. Answered by Baxter, *ib.*
Hyde. See *Clarendon*.

Immortality of the Soul, analysis of Mr. Baxter's Treatise on, with remarks, ii. 26—32.
Independents, Mr. Baxter's character of, with remarks, i. 74—76, 79. Union of the Independent and Presbyterian ministers, 397.
Indictment of Mr. Baxter for sedition, i. 318—321.
Infants, opinion of the Synod of Dort on the Salvation of, ii. 252, *note*. Excellent treatise of Mr. Russell on this subject, 253, *note*.
Infidelity, close connection of Popery with, ii. 247.
Informers against Baxter and others, account of the proceedings of, i. 273—276, 281.
Insurrection of Venner and the Fifth Monarchy-men, account of, i. 200.

Jacob, a Brownist, notice of, i. 28, *note* e.
James, (Duke of York, afterwards King James II.,) opposition of the Parliament to his marrying a Popish wife, i. 268. Exclusion bill passed against him in the House of Commons, 295. But lost in the House of Lords, *ib.*
James's (St.) Market-house, account of Mr. Baxter's preaching there, i. 270. Providential escape of him and his congregation, *ib.*, 272.
Jane (Rev. Dr.,) biographical account of, i. 287, *note*. Preaches against Mr. Baxter, *ib.*
Jefferies (Lord Chief Justice,) conduct of, on Mr. Baxter's trial, i. 323—327.
Jennings (Thomas) charges Mr. Baxter with being guilty of murder, i. 56. Refutation of this false charge, *ib.*
Johnson's (Dr. Samuel) opinion of Baxter, ii. 326.
Johnson, a Romish priest, controversy of Baxter with, on the successive visibility of the church, ii, 219.
Judges, behavior of, to Mr. Baxter, on his applying for a *habeas corpus*, i. 251.
Justices of the Peace, notice of Mr. Baxter's 'Directions' to, ii. 144.
Justification, analysis of Mr. Baxter's 'Aphorisms' of, ii. 35. Animadversions thereon, by Anthony Burgess, 36. John Warren, *ib.* Dr. John Wallis, *ib.* Christopher Cartwright, *ib.* George Lawson, *ib.* Observations on the Aphorisms, 38—40. Further attacks on Baxter, by Ludovicus Molinæus, 41. John Crandon, *ib.* William Eyre, *ib.* Analysis of the 'Apology' for the Aphorisms, 42. Extracts from the dedication to Colonel Whalley, *ib.* Extracts from Baxter's 'Confession of Faith,' on justification, &c., 45—48. Notice of his 'Four Disputations on Jus-

tification,' 50. Analysis of his 'Treatise on Justifying Righteousness,' and account of its opponents, 52.
Juxon, (Dr.,) Archbishop of Canterbury, character of, i. 220.

Keeling, an informer against Baxter, account of, i. 274, 275. He is liberated from prison through Baxter, 281.
Kendal (Dr.,) an opponent of Mr. Baxter, notice of, ii. 50.
'*Key for Catholics*,' notice of, ii. 218.
Kidderminster, inhabitants of, petition against their minister, i. 31. A Committee of, invite Mr. Baxter to become their lecturer, *ib.* He is chosen lecturer, and goes to reside there, 32. State of the people there, *ib.* Account of his first residence there, *ib.* He is obliged to quit the town, 41. Returns, and is again obliged to withdraw, 42. Once more resumes his labors there, 95. His account of his labors there, 108. His success, 109. Advantages enjoyed by him there, 111—122. Remarks on his style of preaching there, 122. On his public and private exertions, 123. Their lasting effects at Kidderminster, 124. Account of his system of pastoral government there, ii. 156—158. Notice of his successors in the ministry there, i. 125. Notice of his various labors, and works composed, during his second residence, in Kidderminster, 150. His efforts to be restored to Kidderminster, 194. Charles II. and Lord Clarendon favorable to them, *ib.* Frustrated by Sir Ralph Clare and Bishop Morley, 194—196. Why Morley would not allow him to return to Kidderminster, ii. 273, *note*. The conduct of Clare to the people of Kidderminster, i. 198. Character of some of his successors, 205. His parting advice to his flock, *ib.* Extract from his dedication to them of his 'Treatise on Conversion,' ii. 75. Of his 'Directions to the Converted,' 83. Of his 'Saint or a Brute,' 91.
Kippis's (Dr.) parallel between Baxter and Orton, ii. 325. Remarks on it, *ib.*
'*Knowledge and Love Compared*,' plan of Mr. Baxter's treatise on, ii. 112—115.

Lamplugh (Bishop,) anecdotes of, i. 289, *note* i.
Langport, account of the battle of, i. 54.
Latin verses of Mr. Baxter, specimen of, ii. 59.
Latitudinarian divines, Mr. Baxter's account of, i. 237. Observations thereon, *ib.* and *note*.
Laud, (Archbishop,) conduct of, and its effects, ii. 192.
Lauderdale (Lord,) character of, i. 253. Offers preferment to Mr. Baxter, 255. His admirable reply to this offer, 285. Proceedings of parliament against him, 278. His opinion of Grotius, ii. 215, *note* c. Baxter's 'Full and Easy Satisfaction which is the Safe Religion,' dedicated to him, 222. Their correspondence, 223.
Lawson (George,) an opponent of Mr. Baxter, notice of, ii. 36.
Lecture, Tuesday morning, instituted, i. 266. Its present state, *ib.*, *note* z.
Leigh's (Edward) System of Divinity, character of, ii. 125.
Leighton (Dr.,) notice of, i. 30, *note* k. Observations on his 'Sion's Plea against Prelacy, *ib.*
L'Estrange (Sir Roger,) character of, i. 331. Anecdote of him, *ib.* Account of his 'Casuist Uneased,' ii. 207.
Library, Baxter's account of his being obliged to part with, ii. 279, 280.
License to preach granted to Mr. Baxter, i. 265. The licenses to Nonconformists recalled, 274.
Liturgy, a reformed one prepared by Baxter, and adopted by the Presbyterian ministers, i. 183. Who brought it to the bishops at the Savoy Conference, 185. Their exceptions to the existing liturgy, 184. Alterations made in it, 193, *note* h. Character of it, ii. 304.
Lloyd (Dr.,) Vicar of St. Martin's, Mr. Baxter's chapel offered to, i. 289. He vindicates Baxter's character, 290.
Locke's (Mr.) observations on the operation of the Act of Uniformity, i. 210. And on the conduct of the clergy towards the Nonconformists, 211, *note*.
London, Mr. Baxter's reflections on the plague of, i. 226. Account of it, 227. Preaching of the Nonconformist ministers to the inhabitants of, 228. Account of the fire of, 232. Benevolence of Mr. Ashurst and the Rev. Mr. Gouge on this occasion, 234. The fire advantageous to the preaching of the silenced ministers, 235, 239. Labors of the Conformist ministers, 235.
Long's (Mr.) attack on Mr. Baxter, notice of, ii. 207. Remarks on his abuse of Baxter's 'Penitent Confession,' 284. His virulent epitaph on Baxter, *ib.*, *note*. Notice of his 'Review' of Mr. Baxter's Life, 289.
Long Parliament, proceedings of, i. 29.
Lord's Day, analysis, with remarks, of Mr. Baxter's treatise on the divine appointment of, ii. 147. How the Lord's-day was celebrated in his early days, 150.
Loughborough, ravages of the plague at, i. 228, *note*.
Love (Mr.,) notice of the execution of, i. 106, *note*.

Madstard (Mr. William,) minister of Bridgnorth, notice of, i. 27.
'*Making Light of Christ*,' a sermon of Baxter's, anecdote respecting the delivery of, ii. 93.
Malignant, origin of the term, i. 39, *note* t.
Manchester (Edward Earl of,) character of, i. 157, *note* h.
Manton, (Dr. Thomas,) character of, i. 243, *note*. Mr. Baxter's character of him, 291. His character of Baxter, ii. 324.
Martin (Henry,) anecdote of, i. 128, *note* m.
Mason (Dr.,) calumny of, against Baxter, i. 288.
Mather, (Increase,) letter of Mr. Baxter to, ii. 320.
Mayot (Rev. Robert) bequeathes a legacy to Baxter, in trust, i. 309. Which is forcibly withheld by the Court of Chancery, but ultimately restored, *ib.*
Meal-Tub Plot, notice of, i. 296, and *note* e.
Melancholy persons, numbers of, consulted Mr. Baxter, ii. 117. Observations on his 'Cure of Melancholy by Faith and Physic,' 118.
'*Methodus Theologiæ Christianæ*,' Mr. Baxter's account of this treatise, ii. 56—58. Analysis of it, 58, and 59, *note* p. Concluding lines of, *ib.*
Millennarian Controversy, account of Baxter's writings on, ii. 261—264.
Milton's (John) character of the Westminster Assembly, i. 69, *note*. Remarks thereon, 70, *note*.
Minister's maintenance, proceedings of the Parliament respecting, i. 128, and *note*. Notice of ministers imprisoned, 243. See *Nonconformists*.
Miracles, argument from, forcibly stated, ii. 17, 18.
'*Mischiefs of Self-Ignorance*,' analysis of Mr. Baxter's treatise on, ii. 86.
Molinæus (Ludovicus,) an opponent of Mr. Baxter, notice of, ii. 42. Baxter's 'Difference between the Power of Magistrates and Church Pastors, and the Roman Kingdom,' why addressed to him, 220.
Monk (General,) conduct of in promoting the Restoration, i. 144. Mr. Baxter's interview with him, 146.
Montgomery (Mr.,) his character of Baxter as a Christian poet, ii. 309.
More, (Dr. Henry,) account of the philosophical notions of, ii. 27. Difference between him and Mr. Baxter on the immortality of the soul, 28.
Morice's (William) 'Coena quasi Koine,' notice of, ii. 162. Mr. Baxter's sentiments on this work, *ib.*
Morley (Dr.,) bishop of Worcester, conduct of, at the Savoy Conference, i. 187, 189. Unites with Sir Ralph Clare in preventing Mr. Baxter's return to Kidderminster, 196. Whom he silences, 204. His reason for so doing, ii. 272, *note*. In conjunction with Bishop Ward, he purposes a comprehension, 309. Account of Mr. Baxter's controversy with him, ii. 33. Character of the Bishop's 'Vindication' of himself, 90. Notice of publications on this controversy, 91. *note*. His severe reflections on Baxter's recantation of his 'Holy Commonwealth,' 275, *note* y.
Mornay's treatise on the Christian religion, notice of, ii. 32.
Morrice (Dr.) attacks Baxter's 'Church History of Government by Bishops,' ii. 279. Baxter's reply to him, *ib.* Interesting extract from it, *ib.*, 280.

Nalton (Mr. John,) biographical notice of, i. 218, 219.
Naseby battle of, i. 46.
Naylor (James,) a Quaker, observations on the case of, i. 87, and *note* x.
Needham (Marchmont,) biographical notice of, ii. 267, *note* l.
Neville (Henry,) notice of, ii. 267, *note* f.
Nicholas's (Dr. Wm.) writings against the Dissenters, notice of, ii. 291, and *note*.
Nonconformists, why opposed to the bishops, i. 38, and joined to the parliament, 39. Their views after the Restoration, 157. Conduct of Charles II. towards them. *ib.* They have an interview with him, 158. Remarks thereon, 160. They are required to draw up proposals concerning church-government, 161. Which they present to the king, 162. His reply to them, 163. Meeting of Nonconformist ministers with Charles to hear his declaration, 165. They have a meeting with some bishops, 166. Petition the king, 167. Who alters his declaration, 169. Clarendon's account of their conduct, 171. Exposure of its inaccuracy and unfairness, 173. Account of the king's offer to make some of them bishops, 175. Remarks thereon, 179. Account of their proceedings at the Savoy conference, 181—192. Observations on it, 192. Two thousand Nonconformist ministers ejected by the Act of Uniformity, 206. Their character and conduct vindicated, 207—210. Injustice and cruelty of the act exposed, 210. Its injurious effects, 211. Remarks on their jealousy of the Roman Catholics, 217. Severe act against their holding private meetings, 221. Its effects upon the people, 222. Censures of the Nonconformists against their ministers, 223. Devoted labors of the silenced Nonconformist ministers in London during the plague, 228. The Five-mile act passed against them, 230. Observations on it, *ib.* The fire of London favorable to the preaching of the Nonconformists, 235. Which is connived at, 239. Account of the efforts made by

the Lord Keeper and others to procure comprehension for the Nonconformists, 240. Efforts of Archbishop Sheldon to crush them, 242. Many of them imprisoned, 243. The Nonconformist ministers present an address to the king, *ib.* Its reception, 244. They are assailed from the press, *ib.* Charles II. connives at their toleration, 260—262. Their proceedings in relation to the king's dispensing declaration, 265. Proceedings of the aspiring Conformists against them, 270. Persecution against them renewed by order of Charles II., 286. Their oppressed situation between 1676 and 1681, 297, and at the close of Charles II.'s reign, *ib.* Mr. Fox's remarks on the conduct of the court towards the Nonconformists, 316. Observations thereon, *ib.*

Nonconformity defined, ii. 189. Observations on the history of Nonconformity, 190. Some principles of Nonconformity adopted by Mr. Baxter, *ib.* Analysis, with remarks, of his various works on Nonconformity: of the 'Account of the Proceedings at the Savoy Conference,' 194. This treatise never answered, *ib.* 'Sacrilegious Desertion of the Ministry Rebuked,' *ib.* Notice of Dr. Fulwood's reply to this treatise, 196. 'The Judgment of Nonconformists concerning the Office of Reason in Religion,' *ib.* 'Difference between Grace and Morality,' *ib.* 'About Things Indifferent,' *ib.* 'About Things Sinful,' *ib.* What mere Non-conformity is not, *ib.* Observations on these several tracts, 197. The 'Nonconformist's Plea for Peace,' *ib.* Reply to it, by Mr. Cheney, 200. Second part of the 'Plea,' *ib.* Defence of it, *ib.* Attack of it by Dr. Stillingfleet, 201. Answer of Baxter to his charge of separation, 203. Stillingfleet's reply in his 'Unreasonableness of Separation, 204. Baxter's 'Third Defence' noticed, *ib.* His further answer to Stillingfleet, 205. Various supporters of Stillingfleet, 206. Baxter's 'Search for the English Schismatic,' 207. 'Treatise of Episcopacy,' 208. 'Apology for the Nonconformist's Ministry,' 209. 'English Nonconformity Truly Stated,' 210. Remarks on these various publications, *ib.*

North, (Lord Keeper), character of, i. 310, *note* c.

Nye (Mr.) endeavors to persuade Mr. Baxter to accept Charles II.'s declaration of indulgence, i. 216.

Oates (Titus), and the popish plot discovered by him, i. 292, 293. His character, 293, *note* x.

Oaths, profligate disregard of, by Charles II., i. 156, and *note* f. Oath required by the Five-mile-Act, and observations on it, 230. Lord Keeper Bridgman's construction of it, 232. It is taken by Dr. Bates, *ib.* Oath required by the bishops' Test Act, 281.

Occasional Communion, discussions among the Nonconformists respecting, i. 226.

Ollyffe's (Thomas) 'Defence of Ministerial Conformity,' notice of, ii. 292.

Ormond (Duke of), notice of, i. 167, *note* z.

Orrery (Earl of), see *Broghill.*

Orton's (Rev. Job) character of Baxter's writings, ii. 326. Remarks on Kippis's parallel between Baxter and Orton, 325.

Osborne (Sir Thomas), see *Danby.*

Overton's (Richard) treatise on 'Man's Mortallitie,' answered by Mr. Baxter, ii. 26.

Owen (Rev. Dr.), controversy of Mr. Baxter with, on the terms of agreement among Christians, i. 254. And on catholic communion, ii. 182. Supposed address of Owen to the disputers on this subject, 184.

Owen (Mr. John), one of Baxter's tutors, character of, i. 11.

Oxendon-street, a chapel erected in, for Mr. Baxter, i. 282. It is offered to Dr. Lloyd, vicar of St. Martin's in the Fields, 289. Its subsequent history, *ib.*, *note* k.

Oxford, act of parliament passed at, against the Nonconformists, i. 230.

Packington (Sir John), notice of, i. 196. Intercepts a letter of Mr. Baxter's, 200.

Pagitt's (Ephraim) Heresiography, notice of, i. 92, *note.*

'Paraphrase on the New Testament,' origin and object of, ii. 305. Extracts from, on which Mr. Baxter was indicted for sedition, i. 322, *note.* Why it contains no exposition of the book of Revelations, ii. 307.

Parliament, forces of, why increased by the accession of the Puritans, i. 36. Its cause, why embraced by Baxter, 41. Remarks on his treatment of the Parliament, 105. Cromwell's conduct towards the Parliament, 127. Character of Cromwell's Parliament, 128, *note* n. Their proceedings with regard to the maintenance of ministers, *ib.* and *note* o. Their apprehensions of, and opposition to, Popery, 258, 266, 267. Oppose the Duke of York's marrying a popish princess, 268. Prorogued by Charles II., *ib.* Proceedings of, against Lauderdale and Lord Danby, 278. Their proceedings on re-assembling, 279. Debates in Parliament on the bishops' Test act, *ib.* Disputes between the Lords and Commons respecting privileges, 281. The Long Parliament dissolved by Charles II., 294. A new one called, and the Exclusion bill passed by the House of Commons, 295. But lost in the House of Lords, *ib.* Prorogation of this Parliament, and resolutions of the House of Commons, 296.

Passive obedience, doctrine of, asserted by Mr. Baxter, ii. 131. Observations on the principles and writings of some of the clergy on this subject, 132.
Patience, account of Mr. Baxter's treatise on, ii. 108.
Peace of Conscience, publication of Mr. Baxter's 'Right Method' for, ii. 98. Extract from the dedication of it to Colonel Bridges, 99. And to the poor in spirit, 100. Character of this treatise, *ib.*
Peirce (Dr.), conduct of, at the Savoy conference, i. 191, and *note* d. Vindicates Grotius, and attacks Mr. Baxter, ii. 214. Notice of his 'New Discoverer Discovered,' 216.
'Penitent Confession' of Baxter, notice of, ii. 283, 286. And of its assailants, 282, 283.
Penn (William), controversy with Baxter, i. 284, and *note*.
Perkins's (William) 'Golden Chain,' notice of, ii. 125.
Perseverance of the saints, analysis of Mr. Baxter's 'Thoughts' on, ii. 50.
Pettit's (Edward) 'Visions of Government,' and attacks on Baxter, notice of, ii. 272, *note* u.
Pinner's Hall, Mr. Baxter preaches at, i. 265. Account of the lectures there, 291.
Plague of London, ravages of, i. 227. Mr. Baxter's reflections on it, 226. Preaching of the Nonconformist ministers to the inhabitants of, 228. Notices of works respecting it, 229, *note* r.
Poetry (Latin) of Mr. Baxter, specimen of, ii. 59. And of his English poetry, with remarks, 107, 311—314.
Political affairs, the conduct of ministers respecting, considered, ii. 265. Analysis of Baxter's Political Works, 266—274.
Pollexfen (Mr.), argument of, for Mr. Baxter, i. 323. Judge Jefferies' treatment of him, 324.
'Poor Man's Family Book,' analysis of, with remarks, ii. 140. Interesting anecdote of this work, 142.
Popery, apprehensions of the bishops and their agents concerning, i. 258. Dread of the nation against it, 266. Public fast against Popery, 269. Baxter's prayer for deliverance from Popery, ii. 227. Observations on it at the time he wrote, 212. Analysis, with remarks, of his works against Popery:—'The Safe Religion,' 213. 'A Winding-Sheet for Popery,' *ib.* 'Grotian Religion Discovered,' 214. Controversy to which it gave rise, 215—218. 'Key for Catholics,' 218. 'Successive Visibility of the Church,' and controversy with Johnson respecting it, 219. 'Fair Warning; or, Twenty-five Reasons against Toleration of Popery,' 220. 'Difference between the Power of Church Pastors and the Roman Kingdom,' *ib.* 'The Certainty of Christianity without Popery,' *ib.*, 221. 'Full and easy Satisfaction which is the true Religion,' *ib.*, 222. 'Christ, not the Pope, the Head of the Church,' 223. 'Roman Tradition examined,' *ib.* 'Naked Popery,' *ib.* Controversy with Hutchinson respecting it, *ib.* 'Which is the true Church?' 224. Controversy with Dodwell, *ib.* 'Dissent from Dr. Sherlock,' *ib.* 'Answer to Dodwell's Letter calling for more Answers,' 225. 'Against Revolt to a Foreign Jurisdiction,' 226. 'The Protestant Religion truly Stated and Justified,' *ib.* 'Observations on the zeal of Protestant Dissenters against Popery,' 227. Popery the Originator of Antinomianism, 229, 230.
Pordage (Dr.,) notice of the tenets of, i. 88, and *note* z.
Presbyterians, Mr. Baxter's account of the tenets of, i. 72, 73, 79. Remarks thereon, 73. Union of the Presbyterian and Independent ministers, 350.
Profession, Christian, observations on, ii. 160, 161.
Prynne (William), biographical notice of, i. 30, *note* e.
Psalm, the twenty-third, versified by Baxter, ii. 314.
Pulpit in which Mr. Baxter preached, notice of, i. 126, *note* m. Observations on the style best adapted for the pulpit, ii. 77.
Puritans, treatment of, before and at the commencement of the civil wars, i. 34. The garb of, assumed by Romish priests, for the purpose of propagating sedition, ii. 213, *note*.
Pym (John), character of, ii. 295.

Quakers, Mr. Baxter's account of the tenets of, i. 86. Remarks on it, 87, *note* x. Their sufferings under the bill against private meetings, 223, and *note*. Their conduct towards Baxter, ii. 255. Remarks on it, *ib.* 'The Worcestershire Petition' against them, *ib.* The petition defended by Baxter, 256. Who publishes the 'Quaker's Catechism,' 257. Specimen of his questions to them, 258. Notice of his 'Single Sheets' relating to them, *ib.* Controversy with William Penn, on the principles of Quakerism, 259.

Ranters, notice of the tenets of, i. 86.
Read (Rev. Joseph), account of the imprisonment of, i. 287.
'Reasons of the Christian Religion,' view of Mr. Baxter's treatise on, ii. 21—

24. Account of 'More Reasons for the Christian Religion, and no Reason against it,' 25.
Redemption, Mr. Baxter's sentiments on the extent of, ii. 64.
'*Reformed Pastor*,' analysis of, with remarks, ii. 135—139. Notice of abridgments of this treatise, 139. Dr. Doddridge's recommendation of it, *ib.*
Religion, low state of, at the time of Mr. Baxter's birth, i. 10. State of, before and at the commencement of the civil wars, 34—36. State of religious parties from 1646 to 1656, 67—94 Improved state of Religion during the Commonwealth, 141.
'*Reliquiæ Baxterianæ*,' character of, ii. 236. Imperfectly edited by Sylvester, *ib.* Observations on it, 237. Calamy's account of this publication and of its reception, 233—290. Notice of his abridgment of it, and of the controversy to which it gave rise, 290—292.
Restoration of Charles II. account of, i. 145. Remarks thereon, 148.
Revelation (Book of), Mr. Baxter's reasons for not writing an exposition of, ii. 307.
Revolution of 1688, notice of, i. 346.
Reynolds (Dr. Edward) accepts the bishopric of Norwich, i. 179. Observations on his conduct, *ib. note* n.
Rich (Robert, second Earl of Warwick), character of, i. 133, *note.*
Rogers (John), a Fifth-monarchy man, notice of, ii. 267, *note* k.
Rogers (Sir William), minister of Eaton Constantine, notice of, i. 10.
Roman Catholics, jealousy of the Nonconformists against, i. 217. Proofs that their priests disguised themselves as Puritans, ii. 213, *note.*
Rosewell (Rev. Thomas), trial of, on a charge for high-treason, i. 311. Its result, 312.
Rotherham (Mr.), argument of, in behalf of Mr. Baxter, i. 325.
Roundhead, origin of the term, i. 39, *note* s.
Rump-Parliament, put down by Cromwell, i. 127.
Ryves (Dr.), minister of Acton, conduct of, towards Mr. Baxter, i. 247. Causes him to be sent to prison, 249.

Sacraments, analysis of Mr. Baxter's 'Disputations' on the right to, ii. 161. Notice of Mr. Morice's observations on it, 162, and of Mr. Baxter's sentiments respecting them, 163.
'*Saint or a Brute*,' extract from Mr. Baxter's dedication of, ii. 91. Remarks on this treatise, 92.
'*Saint's Everlasting Rest*,' occasion of, ii. 293. Baxter's reasons for omitting the names of Brook, Pym, and Hampden, in the later editions of this treatise, 294. Beautiful quotations from it, 316, 317. Description, character, and usefulness of this work, 298. It is attacked by Giles Firmin, *ib.* And defended by Baxter, *ib.* Character of Mr. Fawcett's abridgment of it, *ib.*
Saltmarsh, biographical notice of, ii. 235, and *note.*
Sanderson (Dr.), bishop of Lincoln, conduct of, at the Savoy Conference, i. 190, and *note* z.
Saravia (Dr. Adrian), notice of, i. 28, *note* h.
Savoy Conference, a royal commission issued for holding, i. 180. History of the proceedings at it, 181—192. Remarks thereon, 192.
Sawyer (Sir Robert), character of, i. 310, *note* b.
Schoolmen, Mr. Baxter's opinion of, ii. 114. Character of some of their works, 123.
Scotch Presbyterians, oppression of, i. 294, and *note* a.
Seddon (Mr.), imprisonment of, for preaching, i. 235. Is liberated by Baxter, *ib.*
Seekers, notice of the tenets of, i. 85.
Self-Denial, analysis of Mr. Baxter's treatise on, ii. 106. Extract from the dedication of it, 104—106.
Sharpe (Rev. John, afterwards archbishop of St. Andrews), notice of, i. 155, and *note* d.
Shaw (Rev. Samuel), anecdote of, i. 228, *note.*
Sheldon (Dr.), bishop of London, character of, i. 189, *note* y. His proceedings at the Savoy Conference, 181—189. Succeeds to the see of Canterbury, 220. Promotes the passing of the Five-mile act, 230. Which he rigorously enforces, 232. His efforts to crush the Nonconformists, 242, 254, 280, *note* s.
Shepherd (Mr. Sergeant), notice of Mr. Baxter's reply to, on faith, ii. 51.
Sheppard's (Mr.), Divine origin of Christianity, character of, ii. 33. *note.*
Sherlock (Dr.), suspected of instigating the prosecution of Mr. Baxter, i. 322, 323. Notice of his defences of Stillingfleet against Baxter, ii. 206; and of Baxter's 'Account of his Dissent from Dr. Sherlock,' 225.
Smart (Peter), notice of, i. 30, *note* j.
South (Dr.), anecdote of, ii. 276, *note.*
Southampton (Earl), noble opposition of, to the passing of the Five-mile act, i. 230, and *note.*

Southey's (Mr.) account of the Act of Uniformity, mis-statements of exposed, i. 212, *note*.
Spilsbury (Mr. Francis), a successor of Baxter, at Kidderminster, notice of, i. 125.
Spirits:—Account of Mr. Baxter's treatise on the 'Certainty of the World of Spirits,' ii. 29—32.
Sprigge's 'Anglia Rediviva,' character of, i. 46, *note*. His character of the parliamentary army, 54. Notice of his sermons, 83, and *note* r.
Sterne (Dr.), bishop of Carlisle, conduct of, at the Savoy Conference, i. 190.
Sterry (Peter), Mr. Baxter's character of, i. 83, *note* q. Remarks on it, *ib*.
Stillingfleet (Dr.), zealous efforts of, against Popery, i. 268. Character of his 'Origines Sacræ,' ii. 32. His vindication of Baxter from the charge of leaning towards Socinianism, 64. Notice of his 'Irenicum,' 201, *note*. Observations on his 'Mischief of Separation,' *ib*. He is answered by Baxter, 202. Publishes his 'Unreasonableness of Separation,' *ib*. Baxter's reply to it, 205. Notice of some of Stillingfleet's defenders, 206.
Stonehouse's (Sir James) character of Baxter's 'Dying Thoughts,' ii. 304, *note*.
Stubbs (Henry), a partisan of Sir Henry Vane, character of, i. 84, and *note* s. Notice of his writings, ii. 267, *note* i.
Stubbs (Rev. Henry), biographical account of, i. 299. Notice of Mr. Baxter's funeral sermon on him, 300.
Style of Mr. Baxter, remarks on, ii. 383.
Subscription. Mr. Baxter's opinion on, ii. 180. Notice of his 'Sense of the subscribed Articles of the Church of England,' i. 347—349. ii. 185.
Swallow-street, chapel erected in, for Mr. Baxter, i. 283. He is forcibly kept out of it, *ib*. Subsequent history of the church there, *ib*. *note* g.
Sylvester (Mr.), his account of Mr. Baxter's preaching for him, i. 351. And of his last sickness and death, 354, 355. Vindication of his memory from slander, 356. Description of his character and person, 358. Observations on his edition of 'Reliquiæ Baxterianæ,' ii. 286.
Symonds, notices of some Nonconformist ministers of that name, i. 23, *note* n.
Systematic Theology, observations on, ii. 121—124. Notice of the systems of Calvin, 124. Of Perkins, 125. And of Usher and Leigh, *ib*.

Taylor (Colonel Silvanus), biographical notice of, i. 290, *note*.
Taylor (Bishop), observations of, on the paucity of casuistical books among the reformed churches, ii. 127, *note*. His 'Ductor Dubitantium,' compared with Baxter's 'Christian Directory,' 133.
Test Act, proceedings relative to the passing of, i. 267.
Theological Literature of Baxter's time, observations on, ii. 10—14.
Thornborough (Bishop), notice of, i. 24, and *note*.
Tilenus (Daniel), biographical notice of, ii. 215, *note* d. His name assumed by Bishop Womack, in his attacks upon the Puritans, *ib*.
Tillotson (Archbishop), correspondence of Baxter with, on the subject of his court sermon, ii. 201. His opinion of Baxter and Dodwell, 225, *note*. Dedication of Baxter's treatise 'Against Revolt to a Foreign Jurisdiction,' 226.
Toleration of Popery, opposed by Baxter, ii. 220. Account of the passing of the Toleration Act, 246. Mr. Baxter's sense of certain articles of religion required to be subscribed by it, 247—249.
Tombes (John), origin of his controversy with Mr. Baxter, on the subjects and modes of baptism, ii. 246. Account of their conference, 248. Notice of Tombes' 'Antidote against the Venom' of Baxter, 249. And of the reply of the latter in his 'Plain Scripture Proof of Infants' Church-Membership, 250. Of Tombes' 'Precursor,' and 'Anti-pedobaptism,' 251. And of Baxter's 'More Proof of Infant Church-Membership,' 252.
Tomkins (Thomas), an opponent of Mr. Baxter, notice of, ii. 272.
Tongue (Dr. Israel), biographical notice of, i. 292, *note* s.
Totteridge, residence of Mr. Baxter at, i. 253.
Trial of Mr. Rosewell for high-treason, i. 311, 312. And of Mr. Baxter on a charge of sedition, 317—327.
Triers, character of the assembly or committee of, i. 130.
Tully's (Dr.) attack on Mr. Baxter upon justification, notice of, ii. 52.

Uniformity, Act of, i. 206. Its impolicy, 207. Injustice and cruelty, 210. Its injurious effects, 211. Mr. Southey's mis-statements respecting it, exposed, 212, *note*.
Union of the early Christians, ii. 152. Causes of separation, 153. Means of promoting re-union, *ib*.
'*Unreasonableness of Infidelity*,' dedication of, to Lord Broghill, ii. 16. Intended as a reply to Clement Writer, *ib*. Its plan and arrangement, 15. Five observations on miracles, 17—19. And on the Spirit's testimony to the Gospel, 19.

Usher (Archbishop) persuades Mr. Baxter to write his treatise on Conversion, ii. 78. Notice of his system of divinity, 125.

Vane (Sir Henry), and the Vanists, Mr. Baxter's account of, i. 82—85. Remarks on it, 85, *note*.
Vaughan (Lord Chief Justice), character of, i. 260, *note* n. Opinion of, on Mr. Baxter's mittimus, 251. His opinion against the fining of jurymen, 260.
Venner's insurrection, account of, i. 200, and *note*.
Villiers, see *Buckingham* (Duke of).
Vincent (Rev. Thomas), labors of, in London, during the plague, i. 229, and *note* q.

Walker's (James) 'Account of the Sufferings of the Clergy,' character of, ii. 291.
Walking with God, felicity of, ii. 301, 302.
Wallis (Dr. John), an antagonist of Baxter, notice of, ii. 36.
Wallop (Mr.), arguments of, in behalf of Mr. Baxter, i. 324.
Ward (Seth, bishop of Salisbury), biographical notice of, i. 259, *note* i. He prevents the passing of a comprehension act, 272. His activity against the Nonconformists, 259, and *note*.
Warmestry, (Dr.), dean of Worcester, preaches against Mr. Baxter, i. 204.
Warner (John), an opponent of Mr. Baxter, notice of, ii. 50, and *note* h.
Warren (John) an opponent of Baxter, notice of, ii. 36.
Webster's (John) 'Displaying of Witchcraft,' notice of, ii. 31, *note*.
Westminster Assembly, see *Assembly of Divines*.
Whalley (Colonel), why engaged to Cromwell, i. 49. Receives Mr. Baxter as chaplain to his regiment, 50. Character of it, *ib*. Notice of the colonel, ii. 45. Dedication of Baxter's 'Apology' to him, 42, 43.
White (Thomas), a Catholic priest, notice of, ii. 266, *note* e.
Wickstead (Richard), one of Baxter's tutors, notice of, i. 12.
Wight (Isle of), account of the treaty of, with Charles, i. 99.
Wilberforce's (Mr.) opinion of Mr. Baxter's works, ii. 327.
Wilkins (Dr. John), bishop of Chester, character of, i. 241, *note* m. His character of Mr. Baxter, ii. 324.
William III., Toleration Act of, and remarks on it, i. 346.
Williams (Dr. Daniel), opposes Antinomianism, ii. 241.
Witchcraft, and apparitions, remarks on, ii. 30.
Womack's (Bishop) 'Examination of Tilenus before the Triers,' notice of, ii. 215, 216. And of his 'Arcana Dogmatum Anti-Remonstrantium,' 216.
Worcester, battle of, i, 107.
Worcestershire Ministers, agreement of; its design, ii. 156. Articles of their agreement for catechising, 159.
Writer (Clement), notice of, ii. 16, *note* e. Mr. Baxter's 'Unreasonableness of Infidelity,' designed as a reply to him, *ib*.

York (Duchess of), becomes a Papist, i. 253, *note*.
Young Men, Mr. Baxter's compassionate counsel to, noticed, ii. 147.
Young's 'Anti-Baxterianæ,' notice of, ii. 290. His virulent epitaph on Baxter, 284, *note*.